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MISCELLANIES;

BY THE

Rev. WILLIAM HETT, A. M.

AND

PREBENDARY OF LINCOLN.

Scilicet uni æquus virtuti atque ejus amicis.

HORACE.

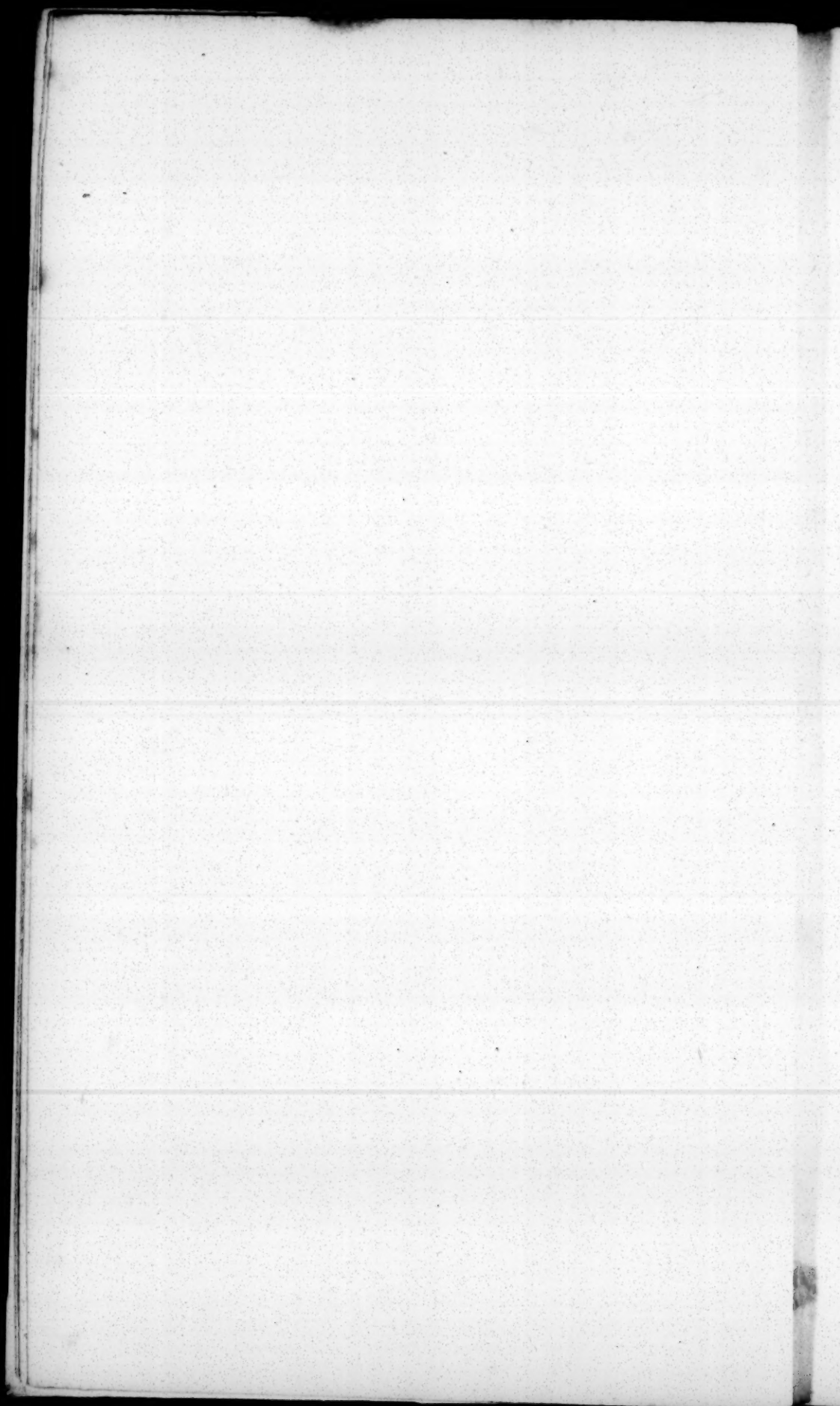
L O N D O N :

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NEWCOMB, at STAMFORD, 1794.



THE GENUINE
TREE OF LIBERTY;
OR, THE
ROYAL OAK
OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. 1 PETER ii. 16, 17.



TO THE
MAYOR AND CORPORATION

OF THE CITY OF LINCOLN ;

AND TO ALL

THOSE MEMBERS OF THE

COMMUNITY AT LARGE,

WHO ARE UPON

PRINCIPLE ATTACHED TO

AND

WISH TO SUPPORT

OUR HAPPY CONSTITUTION

IN CHURCH AND STATE ;

DULY SENSIBLE OF

HIS UTTER INABILITY

TO DO JUSTICE TO

SO EXALTED A THEME,

THESE SENTIMENTS

ARE, WITH THE MOST PROFOUND

HUMILITY AND RESPECT,

ADDRESSED BY

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages, excepting a few slight additions and alterations, were read before a meeting of his Majesty's most faithful and loyal subjects, held at the Guildhall in the city of Lincoln, on Wednesday, December 19. 1792. in order to counteract and to suppress the attempts of Republicans and Levellers.

MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN—

AN obscure individual, and unpractised in the art of extempore elocution, I hope I shall not give offence to any one present, if I presume to read my sentiments in the presence of this very numerous and respectable assembly: called together, shall I say? or rather impelled by their own loyal inclinations to give this public testimony of their firm and well-grounded attachment to the King and the constitution of Great Britain.

A King, whose virtues, private as well as publick, cannot fail to endear him to all those who are in the least degree concerned for the good order and the prosperity of this kingdom. In his private character, our most gracious Sovereign holds up to his subjects a model of every social, of every Christian virtue. He is a kind husband, a tender parent, and a faithful friend: a zealous advocate for the advancement of the Christian religion, and a devout observer of the duties it enjoins. Let those who are forward to open their mouths against their lawful Sovereign, practise the same virtues and be silent. In his publick capacity,

city, he has ever manifested himself ready to adopt and to put into execution those plans, for the happiness and the advantage of his subjects, which have been before digested, and are submitted to his approbation, by his good and faithful counsellors : and the superior excellence of these plans cannot be better ascertained than by their effects in promoting and exalting the kingdom of Great Britain above all the nations of the earth. Our internal peace is so firmly rooted, that, were it not for the malicious attempts of the factious and the discontented amongst us, every man, in the charming language of scripture, might *live safely, under his vine and under his fig-tree*, enjoying the fruits of his own honest industry, and laying up a moderate provision for his dear descendants. Our external prosperity is of that extensive nature, that Great Britain is at this time the *emporium* of the world. That which the proud imperial Rome once boasted she had effected by the force of arms, the subjugation of all nations, Great Britain has really accomplished, by the far more humane and less destructive efforts of industry and fair dealing. She has brought about this noble conquest

conquest by the indefatigable exertions of her husbandmen and mechanicks in the improvement of the agriculture and the arts of this island; and by the liberal and enterprizing spirit of her merchants, who export her productions, natural and artificial, to every quarter of the globe. And how much more grateful to the human mind, how much more honourable, how much more beneficial in its present effects and its future consequences, that superiority must be, which is attained by the harmless and inoffensive arts of peace, than one struggled through by the painful and bloody efforts of war, as I am directing my discourse to Englishmen, I need not be at the pains to illustrate.

With regard to the Constitution of this kingdom; in days of yore admired, extolled, and appealed to as a model of perfection by the political writers of all nations, but of late, to its immortal honour, vilified by the pettyfogging law-makers of France; all those who experience its beneficial effects, if they be not biaſſed by party or prejudice, must feel a reason to revere and to respect it. Founded on the mutual support and protection of the prince and the

subject, of the governors, and of those whose lot it is to submit to government, it lays no restraints upon any one, except such as are intended to prevent every one, prince as well as subject, from injuring another, in person, in property, or in good name. If a man does not commit any infringement upon any one of these original rights of man, he may say, he may do, he may write what he pleases: and the establishment and preservation of these natural rights is the final object of all good government.

A state of nature, that is, a state in which the vicious propensities of the multitude are allowed to predominate, is a state of war; in which the property, the life, and every thing dear and valuable, lies at the mercy of any one who excels in subtlety or in strength. To this deplorable situation, or to a situation nearly approaching to it, has that once flourishing and rival kingdom France been reduced by a succession of ignorant and designing men, under the specious cloak of being profound philosophers, and disinterested advocates for the rights of man. A civilized society, under the regulation of a government established on the
immutable

immutable principles of justice and equity, is in a state of peace : in which no man is allowed, with impunity, to injure or to depreciate another. This is the condition of Great Britain at this period. And can any one be so blind to his own interest, or to the interests of the society in which he lives, as to wish to plunge us into the same horrid state of distraction and distress as now reigns through France?—to exchange domestic peace and plenty for confusion and penury?—to reduce the far more worthy and conscientious part of our laborious husbandmen, of our industrious mechanics, of our respectable clergy, of our honourable merchants, of our independent gentry, of our high-born nobility, to this shocking alternative ; either, because they cannot act in contradiction to what they think to be right and just, to be crammed into prison by wholesale, unheard and unconvicted, at the will and by the command of an ignorant, unprincipled, and aspiring demagogue, in order, on a future day, to be dragged forth and massacred by an irritated and ferocious mob ; or else, deprived of all they once held dear, of their country, of their property, of their friends, to wander over the

face of the earth, not knowing where to rest, under the pitiable title of emigrants? Forbid it heaven! forbid it every thing that is good and great in man! forbid it all that is brave and generous in Englishmen!

Oh, how my heart glows with gratitude to the author of my being, for having, during the fleeting period of my terrestrial existence, allotted to me a residence under the gentle sway of the government of Great Britain: under the benign and parental influence of which, the property of individuals is safe, their persons and reputation secure; the infirm and the aged poor are comfortably provided for by the laws of the land; by the opulence and the liberality of its inhabitants, in every county of the kingdom, have been erected and endowed charity-schools, hospitals, and infirmaries, for the prevention or the cure of every malady, mental or corporeal, incident to the human frame; the honest labourer and the ingenious artizan never fail to meet with the encouragement and the protection of their superiors; the laborious peasant, on account of the plenty and the security of his property, may be compared to a prince; and the wealthy merchant, from the exten-

five

five empire of British credit, bounded only by the limits of the civilized world, may with propriety be said to resemble a king.

Not quite approving of and in some degree checked in their career by the unjustifiable enormities committed in France, our staunch champions for the rights of man have now rather lowered their tone: perceiving that the good sense and the indignant spirit of every honest man is roused against them, they begin to be rather more temperate. "They really meant no harm; " they never intended to destroy, but only " to correct; not to pull up by the roots, " but only to train the irregularities, " and to lop off the excrescences of the " British constitution."

But the grand question still is, what meaning these advocates for reformation may take it into their sagacious heads to affix to ~~the~~ words, irregularities and excrescences. It is more than possible, that they may look upon every maxim which is not agreeable to their own tenets, and every measure which does not coincide with their own plans, as an irregularity; and may conceive that the King and a Church Establishment at the least, if not the King, Lords, and

and Commons are excrescences. Were this to be the case, it would be rather a dangerous experiment to entrust the constitution to their tremendous operations. As their professed conviction arises, not from a rational inquiry into the real merits, or a due sense of the beneficial effects of the form of government under which they live, but from a mere necessity of occasional circumstances, it may not be more permanent than the causes by which it was produced. It will therefore be, if not generous, yet prudent, to consider them, however plausible their pretences, as real enemies, though pretended friends. When a man has once attempted, in cool blood, and with a deliberate intention, to plunge a dagger into my breast, it would be the height of folly and madness in me, notwithstanding his most solemn asseverations of future attachment, to embrace him as a friend. *Timeo Danaos & dona ferentes.* What could be more fascinating than the numerous advantages held forth by the French reformers at their first outset. When their elevated and highly improved principles should once be reduced to practice, all was to be peace, happiness, and prosperity throughout the extended regions of France.

But

But in what have the labours of these mighty projectors terminated? In the translation of property from its legal owners, to those who never before had any property: in the considerable diminution, bordering upon an annihilation, of agriculture and commerce: in the pillaging of churches, the degradation of the clergy, and the neglect of religious worship: in the utter extinction of the order of nobility: in the expulsion of every branch of the royal family, who are now beggars in Germany, except the king, the queen, and the dauphin; who are probably doomed either to a perpetual imprisonment, or to end their days * upon a scaffold: and lastly, *horresco referens!* in the elevation of a pack of † atheists and ‡ assassins, who have

* Louis XVI. descended from a long line of regal ancestry, the king of the French, as he was ludicrously styled, thus terminated his miserable existence, on the 21st day of January, 1793. And in the same manner died by the hands of the most relentless monsters, Marie Antoinette, of truly noble, and splendid extraction, wife of the above unfortunate Louis. She departed with a greatness of mind superior to her misfortunes on the 16th day of October, 1793.

† Dupont in the national convention professed himself an atheist.

‡ On the 10th of August and the 2d and 3d of September, 1792.

already,

already, more than once, deluged the very seat of justice with the blood of the innocent, to be the legislators and the governors of a great kingdom! These are the enchanting effects of a Jacobin government, or of one founded upon the Rights of Man; or, with still more propriety, upon the rights of Demons* in the assumed garb of humanity. It were a consummation devoutly to be wished, that, if any one, who has the assurance to call himself an Englishman, has either professed or encouraged the diabolical principles, which have produced so wretched a scene of desolation through France; that so vile a traitor to common sense, to common honesty, and to the wise government under the protection of which he enjoys in security every thing he possesses, should be for ever † banished his native land, and be obliged to pass the

* These Demons have at length voted, *Death to be an eternal sleep*, that they may the more effectually perpetrate their malicious purposes. See "Occasional Poems," page 87.

† Thomas Paine, the Knight-Errant and Champion of the Rights of Man, and Miss Williams, the enthusiastic admirer and patroness of liberty and equality, are at this time partaking of the blessed effects of these principles, immured in a French prison.

residue

residue of his days under the auspices of so detestable a state of anarchy and confusion.

Should the vast load of taxes be alledged as an objection to the British Government ; let it be recollected that no regular system of authority and subordination either ever has been or ever can be supported without the payment of taxes ; that such is the prosperous state of affairs in this country, that no industrious and frugal subject is really oppressed by contributing, according to his property, to the exigences of the state ; and that what is demanded of every one on this account, ought to be considered by him as an annual payment made, in order to secure from depredators, domestic as well as foreign, the remainder of his property. Should any one still be querulous, I beg leave to offer to his consideration the reflections of Richard Saunders upon this subject, contained in the preliminary Address to the Pennsylvania Almanack for the year 1758. " Brethren," says he, " and neighbours, the " taxes are indeed very heavy, and if those " laid on us by Government were the only " ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them ; but we have many " others, and much more grievous to some " of

“ of us. We are taxed twice as much by our
 “ idleness, three times as much by our pride,
 “ and four times as much by our folly ; and
 “ from these taxes the commissioners can-
 “ not ease us by allowing any abatement.”

Before any one exclaims against the taxes imposed by Government, he would do well to inform himself whether those mentioned by honest Richard Saunders be not the real cause of his dissatisfaction.

We have heard much of planting the tree of liberty in this kingdom. The tree of liberty, directed and restrained in its growth, has long been planted in, or rather is the natural produce of this island, has taken deep root in it, and has brought forth an abundance of noble and generous fruit ; the wealth, the security, and the liberal and independent spirit of individuals, together with the prosperity and the honourable estimation of the community in which it has flourished. What our Gallic neighbours recommend to us under the above specious title, is the wild uncultivated stock of licentiousness ; the genuine produce of which is anarchy, rapine, murder, and every evil which can harass and distress human society.

To

To cherish and to protect the growth of this indigenous tree of liberty, this original Royal Oak of the soil, is the intention of this respectable meeting. And I trust we all unite in an unaffected approbation of, and a firm determination to support, even at the expence of our lives and property, should any unforeseen emergency demand such a sacrifice, that excellent form of Government, consisting of King, Lords, and Commons, as by law established, handed down to us by our forefathers; by which a well-regulated liberty, and a quiet possession of our property is secured to us and to our posterity.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

GENERAL

GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

IT is now nearly twelve months since the preceding sentiments were thrown together; and it will instantly appear to the discerning reader that they partake of that universal concussion, which, at the time, shook to the very centre the whole island of Great Britain. The agitation was timely and salutary: for by the means of it were separated from the general mass and thrown into sight a large quantity of combustible materials, which, if they had been permitted to ferment in secret, and to communicate their impulse, might in the end have occasioned an explosion, which would have torn asunder and for ever dissipated the surrounding body of the community. The author of the foregoing speech was, on the occasion, very forcibly affected indeed; and for the moment, forgetting that he was a minister of the Gospel, considered himself solely as a member of that society, the very existence of which was threatened by a combination of those, who, under the alluring

luring pretence of the rights of the people, intended to demolish the subordination of society, and to erect they did not know what in its place. He begs that the alarming crisis may be admitted as an apology for the warmth, unjustifiable perhaps, of some of the expressions he has adopted. *Homo sum : humani nihil a me alienum puto.* That the whole system of civil society should be thrown into confusion ; that the peace and the comfort of thousands, and of tens of thousands should be utterly destroyed, in order that half a dozen reason-crazed fanatics in religion, and an equal number of metaphysic-mad theorists in politics might have an opportunity of putting into execution and trying an experiment upon their visionary schemes, is surely too momentous a sacrifice for the most consummate degree of pride and vanity to expect. That every work of the human mind is to a certain degree imperfect, and that forms of government, as well as the constructors of them, have their infancy, their youth, their manhood, their old age, and their final dissolution, is equally evident. Nothing of human invention is permanent and immutable ; all is progressive, stationary for a while, and then

then retrograde. This want of identity takes place in the most perfect of the efforts of frail mortality. Why then add to and increase this natural and necessary deterioration? Why accelerate that termination which will inevitably take place in the general course of events. After the lapse of a few centuries, the applauded government of Great Britain will exist only in the annals of the historian: and future politicians will be struck with astonishment, when they read that in the eighteenth century, a plan was laid, and intended to be put into execution, by a set of factious and discontented spirits, for the utter subversion of this elegant, this well proportioned, this useful fabrick of human art and industry.

Peace is no more; it has been succeeded by the horrors of war. But a state of war is the natural state of man. This state commenced amongst the sons of Adam: Cain slew Abel. * Wars and rumours of wars

** And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Matthew xxiv. 6, 7, 8.*

will

will never cease, so long as the progeny of a depraved parent shall exist upon the face of the earth. Whoever has read the history of any nation, needs not to be informed that civil commotions or external struggles for superiority, on account of some advantage, real or imaginary, are the chief subjects which fill the historic page. Why then censure the chief managers of the drama of a kingdom, for not having prevented the actors upon the stage from sustaining those respective characters, for which they were antecedently adapted; and which characters, even without the concurrence of, and in some cases, in direct opposition to the authority of their superiors, they occasionally assume for their own private gratification. Is it not more than probable that our being engaged in a foreign war has prevented a civil commotion within our own realm? And is not the war in which we at present bear a part, a war dissimilar from any which ever before agitated the breasts of mortal men?—a war in defence of the principles of justice, of humanity, of honour, of religion?—a war in support of the very existence of civil society?—a war worthy of the interposition of Britons? Was the maxim of Cicero
ever

ever more precisely applicable.—*Susciendum esse bellum, ut in pace sine injuriâ vivatur?* For are not the new fangled and unfounded notions of Liberty and Equality destructive of human society itself, by allowing to the lower orders of the community the liberty to equalize mankind, by supplanting and degrading their superiors, at their own supreme will and pleasure; and by so doing to produce a perpetual state of revolution, a never ending scene of plunder, murder, and confusion? And was not a concurrence in hostile measures avoided on our part, and the most scrupulous neutrality observed, till our allies were assailed without any previous offence given; and our own land menaced with devastation by a gang of lawless freebooters, who were endeavouring to overturn the peace of, and to ravage and to plunder all Europe? And is it not to be supposed that *that* over-ruling power, *without whose notice not even a sparrow falls to the ground*, and who is *the God of all the kingdoms of the earth*, 2 Kings xix. 15. either permits or occasions these terrible scourges of the human race, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, for wise and good purposes, known only to himself; and
which

which it is impossible for the deepest penetration of human intelligence to fathom? He alone perceives what is most conducive to the real advantage of the sons of men during their abode on earth, fleeting as it is, and beset with public calamities and private miseries. And it is the duty of those, who believe that all things work together for the good of those who love God; who are persuaded that every momentous event in the course of human affairs, has a tendency, however remote and invisible to mortal eyes, to the advancement of true religion amongst men, and to the general and final advantage of his creatures, whilst they inwardly deplore with as pungent a sensibility as those, who are the most vociferous in their lamentations, and the most industrious in their invectives, the direful ravages of hostile operations; to partake of the blessings of peace with thankful hearts, and to be ready to support the exigences of war, whether by personal service or pecuniary contribution, without murmuring, and without reviling, those short-sighted agents, who, unconscious of the event of their own plans, constructed upon the most

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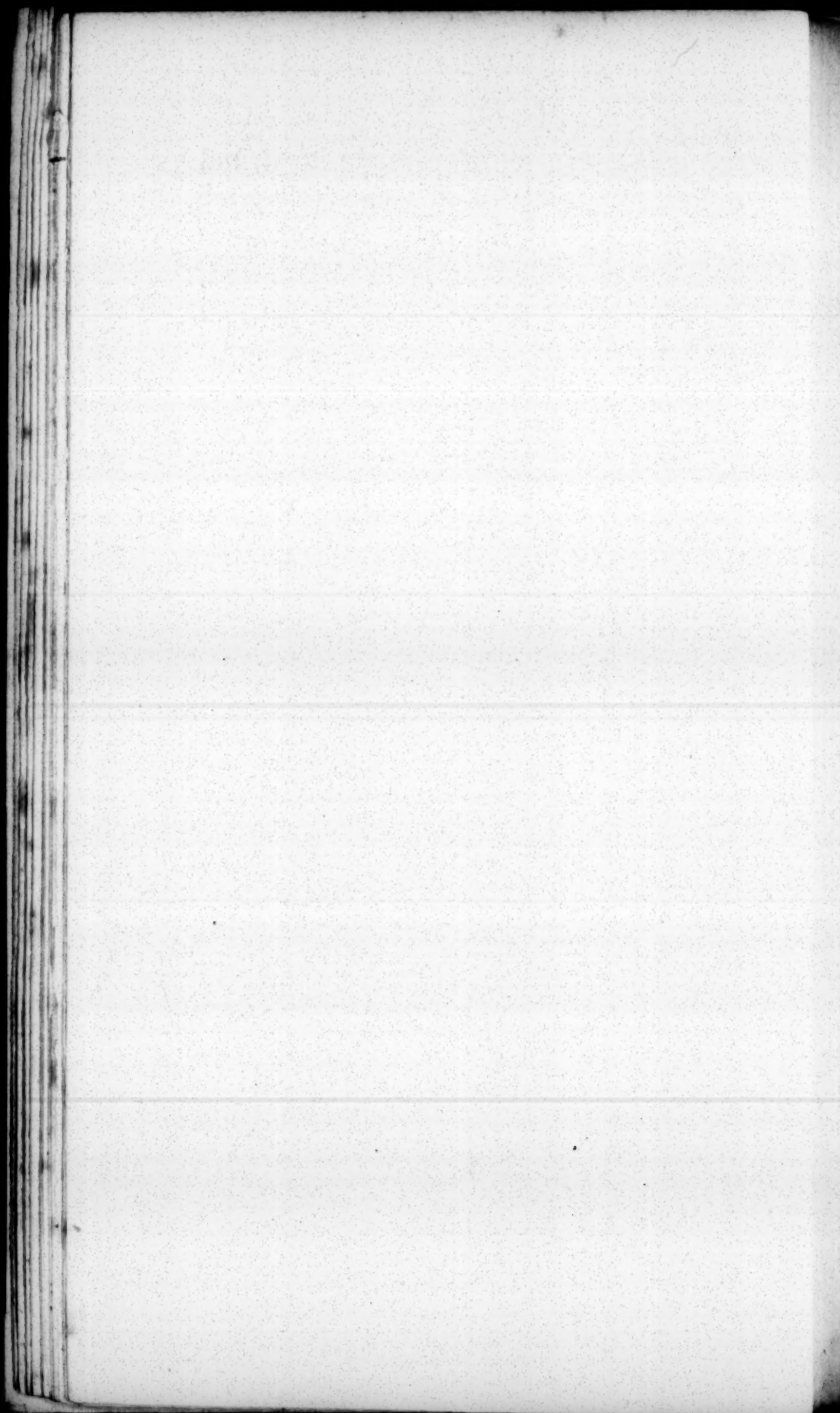
approved

approved maxims of human policy, are fulfilling the beneficent intentions of the Divine Providence.

The union of Liberty and Equality has produced a series of revolutions in France; and the same principles would have the same effect in any other kingdom. In the circumvolution of a wheel on its axis, one point is always at the top of the circle, but the same point retains not its situation for more than an instant of time, and is continually succeeded by other points, which advance to the summit in their turns. This has been precisely the progress of affairs amongst the French reformers. The first champions for Liberty and Equality, who probably flattered themselves that they should remain for some time at the summit of the wheel, when they had once arrived there, shortly gave place to their inferiors, and they as speedily to theirs; till at length one and twenty heads of the National Convention have been struck off within the space of half an hour, in order to make room for others impatient to seize the place of preeminence. The meaning then of Liberty and Equality is by facts demonstrated
to

to be as follows :—“ All men are equal, and
“ are equally possessed of a right to cut off
“ the heads of their superiors, and these
“ again shall in like manner be dispatched,
“ in order to be succeeded by others, *ad*
“ *infinitum !*” *Sic transit gloria mundi !*

November 20, 1793.



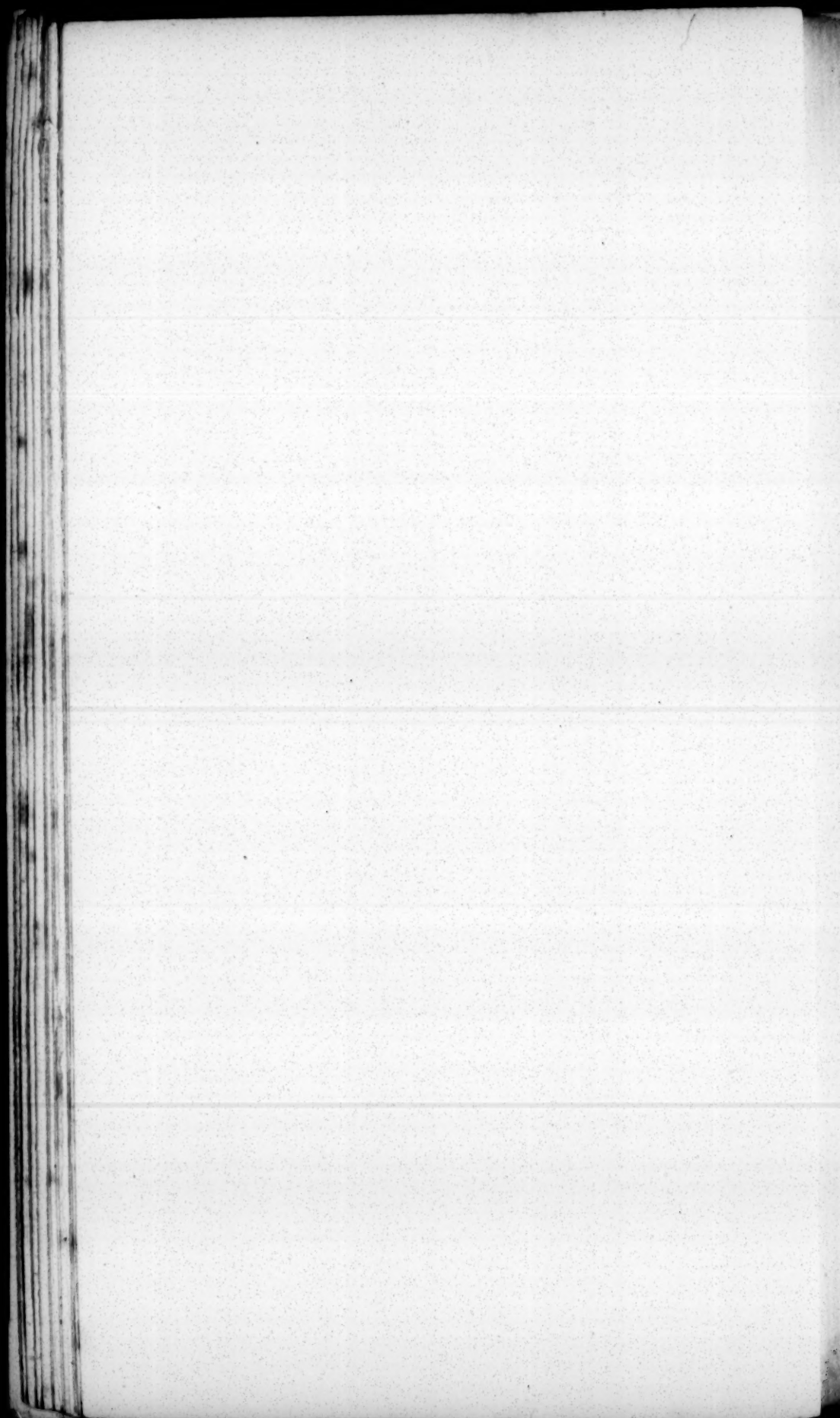
A
L E T T E R
TO
M R. J — — — P — — — ,
OF
N E T T L E H A M ,
IN THE
C O U N T Y OF L I N C O L N ,
FROM THE
R E V. W. H E T T , A. M.
AND
M I N I S T E R OF THE P A R I S H .

Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.

HEB. xiii. 9.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond
of peace.

EPHES. iv. 3.



ADVERTISEMENT.

IT may be necessary to inform the general reader, that Nettleham is a pleasant village, situated at about the distance of two miles from the city of Lincoln, containing between seventy and eighty families, and something more than two hundred and sixty inhabitants. These are several of them respectable farmers, and possessed of landed property: the remaining part are day-labourers, a few small tradesmen and mechanicks. The church is a neat, spacious, and elegant Gothic structure. The author of the following Epistle is the established minister of the parish, and does the duty of the church regularly at a stated hour every Sunday.

Had he been the sole dispenser of Gospel truths to his parishoners, he would probably have been freed from much trouble and uneasiness, and the subsequent pages would never have seen the light; but he has been assisted in the discharge of his ministerial functions, for the most part, on every

B 4

Lord's

Lord's day, by two preaching mechanicks, or day-labourers : and in addition to these instructions to be had at home, not a few of his flock have wandered to Lincoln, that they might have an opportunity of imbibing information from the mouth of some spiritual Quixotte, resident or itinerant. From the different tenets and jarring persuasions of so many teachers, what could be expected, except what followed, confusion, and no very favourable opinion of the established minister.

The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. And he was not a very wise man who asserted, that religion is a composition of policy and priestcraft, invented by designing men, in order to reduce the lower orders of society to a peaceable submission, and a quiet subserviency to the will of their governors. That religion, in that pure and unadulterated state in which it proceeded from the Deity, has a natural tendency, antecedently to any human agency or interference, to produce peace amongst men, by moderating their selfish desires, and restraining their irascible passions, and by implanting in their breasts an unlimited good will, and a friendly disposition towards all
their

their fellow-creatures, is a sacred truth, confirmed as well by the word of God, as by the concurring experience of all those who are wise enough to submit to its precepts. *Her ways are, indeed, ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* Whereas the more religion is corrupted by the perverse interpretations, and debased by an accommodation to the wayward prejudices and the malignant propensities of mankind, the less it becomes qualified to attain the end for which it was originally intended; and in too many instances, instead of being the author of harmony and love, is converted into an instrument of dissension and strife, of war and bloodshed. Hence it happens, that false systems of religion, founded upon the ignorance and the presumption of those who profess and propagate them, especially if more than one of this complexion prevail in any society, whether small or large, are almost universally found to occasion private animosity and public discord.

With regard to the contentious spirit of sectaries in a small community, the author can speak from facts, which have taken place

in the parish of Nettleham; in which these violent advocates, for what they suppose to be the truth, have caused many private quarrels, and much public altercation, together with a plentiful abuse of the established minister of the Gospel. He does not perceive that either the morals or the manners of those who dissent from the Church, are in the least amended by their superior degree of knowledge. Amongst the several champions for their own particular tenets, none have been more industrious in making converts than the Antinomians, who assert that good works are not essentially necessary to salvation; and who unite the principles of sedition with the doctrines of, what they are pleased to denominate, the only true system of Christianity. By the active zeal of these were introduced into the parish Antinomian tracts and seditious pamphlets, particularly Paine's Rights of Man. No small trouble was taken to recommend these two extraordinary religious and political heresies to the attention of the inhabitants; and there is reason to suspect, with some degree of success.

As soon as these unpleasant circumstances came to the knowledge of the author, he
thought

thought it his duty to endeavour to counteract, as much as possible, the pernicious effects of the above false opinions. With this view he selected the subjects of his discourses: and whenever a proper opportunity presented itself, he enlarged upon the necessity of obedience to all God's commandments, and recommended a peaceable submission to lawful authority. These his well-meant endeavours had a very different effect from what he hoped and expected. Instead of convincing, they irritated the gainsayers: instead of persuading them to recede from their opinions, they caused them to adhere to them with a more determined pertinacity; and drew down the ill-will, and in some instances, the personal abuse of those whom they were intended to direct and to lead into the paths of truth and righteousness.

Finding his efforts from the pulpit ineffectual, he determined with himself to address his sentiments from the press to the chief convert to Antinomianism resident in Nettleham, and the most zealous promoter of its doctrines amongst his neighbours; thinking that by this mode of proceeding,

matters might be brought to some sort of an issue between him and his opponents. With this view he composed the following Epistle ; which, for reasons not necessary to be enumerated, did not appear in print till the September after it was written.

LETTER

L E T T E R

T O

MR. J——— P———.

Lincoln, June 5, 1793.

S I R,

WHEN last I saw you at Nettleham, at a meeting of the inhabitants called together for the purpose of settling the parish accounts, now about a fortnight ago, you told me, in the hearing of the company, that “ you had deserted the “ church, because I do not preach the Gospel, and that the person you now hear is “ a preacher of the Gospel.” If this charge against me were as well founded, as it was confidently affirmed, it would be a very heavy one indeed, and one that I should have severely to answer for on the great day. But before you, or any other of my parishioners take upon you to decide whether
I preach

I preach the Gospel or not, I would advise you to attend to my discourses for a whole year together; and not only to hear what I say, but moreover to reduce practice the duties I recommend. When you shall have done this, you will be much better qualified to judge of the soundness of my doctrines. *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* John vii. 17. As the Scriptures give the best directions for a good life, so a good life is the best comment upon the Scriptures. He who, with a sincere intention, and according to the best information he can procure, makes the sacred writings the rule of his conduct, will seldom be at a loss to comprehend the meaning of them: and whenever he meets with any difficulties, which he cannot surmount, or any obscurities which he cannot explain, satisfied with and rendered happy by the practical efficacy of what he does understand, he presumes not to be wise above what is written; he wrests not the Scripture to his own preconceived opinions, but without reluctance acquiesces in that degree of ignorance which he has not the means to avoid.

The

The tree is acknowledged to be truly valuable, not from the beauty or the multitude of its leaves, but on account of the usefulness and the abundance of its fruit. The man is known to be what he ought to be, not by his words only, be they ever so pure, ever so religious, but by his practical virtues and Christian graces. *Though he speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, he is become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though he have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though he have all faith, so that he could remove mountains, and have not charity, he is nothing.*

1 Cor. xiii. 1. He may be possessed of the form of godliness, but he is an utter stranger to the power of it. A man may, by repeated groaning and constant affectation, bring his appearance to be that of a death's head upon a mop-stick; he may make his visage still more lamentable by the addition of a slouched hat and lank hair; he may ever be upon the cant and whine; he may be able to string together texts of scripture upon any given subject with as much expedition as he can count his fingers; he may, upon the most trivial occasions, have
the

the sacred name of Jesus Christ upon his tongue's end; he may constantly introduce religious subjects into conversation, and be ready to fight with every one, who does not think as he does, and still be very far from being actuated by the true and genuine spirit of the mild and merciful Jesus. *Behold, my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.* Matth. xii. 18. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* Matth. vii. 21. The Christian religion does not consist in faith only, but in works also; not in an affected garb and outside formality, in violent words and zealous expressions, but in the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, in keeping a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. *Who is wise and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.* James iii. 13. As the real existence of a man's faith is shewn by his works; James ii. 18, 26.

So

so the genuine excellence of any precepts cannot be better ascertained than by the effects they produce upon the lives and manners of those who make them the rule of their actions. Could you, who think and speak ill of me, be once induced to lay aside your own self-sufficiency, and submit to be led to the WATERS OF COMFORT by your established pastor for the space of twelve months, you would probably, at the termination of them, be far wiser and better men, better neighbours, and better Christians; and would be much more charitably disposed towards me than at present you are.

But as the matter now is; whilst one of you is of Paul, another of Apollos, another of Cephas, and another of Christ; whilst you are running after every pretender to religious information, each adhering with a determined obstinacy to the opinions suggested by his new guide, and endeavouring with all his might to compel others to come into the notions he himself has adopted; when you meet together, whatever may be the occasion, you generally quarrel before you part concerning your religious tenets: and at the time you persuade yourselves that you are respectively employed in converting

verting others to the TRUE FAITH, you are effectually destroying that CHARITY in your own breast and in that of your neighbour, without which all your pretensions to a superior knowledge, and a belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, is an empty boast and a ridiculous folly. When you vouchsafe to attend the divine service at your parish church on a Sunday, you come charged with the same spirit of self-conceit and captiousness. You do not enter the house of God, as you ought to do, with humility and self-abasement, with a hearty desire to pray, and to be instructed in saving truths by hearing the word of God read and preached to you; but you come full of your own prejudices and prepossessions: and if you do not hear there what your respective teachers have asserted to be the Gospel; and it is impossible for any one man, were he ever so willing, to accommodate his notions to the discordant maxims of all your instructors; you remain in the house of prayer with disgust and dislike; you leave it vexed and disappointed, and probably employ the remaining part of the Lord's day in making ill-natured remarks upon what THE PARSON SAID, and in reviling him, because

cause he does not think as you have been taught to think. *Now in this that I declare unto you, to adopt the language of the Apostle upon a similar occasion, I praise you not, that ye come together, not for the better, but for the worse.* 1 Cor. xi. 17.

And he who attends the divine service in publick, with no other intention but the malicious one of finding fault with his teacher, had much better say his prayers at home in private, and make “ that most
“ excellent gift of charity, the very bond
“ of peace, and of all virtue, without
“ which whosoever liveth is counted dead
“ before God,” the main object of his petitions to the throne of mercy.

Having thus far addressed myself to those only of my parishioners who censure me because they are not satisfied with the general tenor of my discourses; the number of whom, I have the pleasure to know, is very small, when compared with that of those whose good opinion I have the happiness to possess; but of whom I look upon you as the most violent, and a professor of the most dangerous principles; I now beg the attention of both my friends and enemies to the following facts and reflections.

You

You must recollect, that on a Sunday, about two months ago, in the church porch, you asserted, in like manner, before the major part of the neighbours then and there assembled, that "good works are not essentially necessary to salvation." I believe these were your very words. I will add two other circumstances of a similar nature; the former of which occurred to me, and the latter is the subject of common conversation at Lincoln.

One Sunday last winter, as I was riding home from Nettleham, after having done the duty of the church there, I met a parishioner of mine, a weaver, on his return from Lincoln, probably brimful of the precious doctrines he had recently imbibed at a shop of profaneness there established. Not having for some months past seen him at his parish church, and having been informed that he led a very wicked life in many respects, I thought I should not act improperly if I inquired the reason of his absence. Addressing the man by his name, says I, to the best of my recollection, "You never come to the church."

"Oh, no, Sir, I'm what's called an AN-
" TINOMIAN.

"TINOMIAN. I know it's an ABSCONDED
"BLASPHEMY NAME."

"Well, but whatever be your name or
"religious persuasion, you must believe
"that you ought to lead a good life: and I
"understand you are guilty of a many very
"bad things, such as frequent drunkenness,
"absenting yourself from your wife and fa-
"mily by the week together."

"Oh, Sir," replies the man archly, "WE
"DON'T STAND MUCH UPON WORKS."

The day being cold, I could not remain long enough upon the road to attempt to convince him that it is necessary to practise the several duties recommended in the Gospel, as well as to believe its doctrines, if we wish to be indeed the disciples of Jesus Christ; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who exhibited to his followers, in his own conduct, the most consummate example of every moral excellence, of every practical virtue. This man has occasionally, since the above declaration, attended the service of the church: but, he being seated exactly opposite to me, I cannot help observing that, whenever I am inculcating upon my hearers the necessity of a good life, he seems not to rest easy upon

upon his feat; and by several antick tricks, such as hiding his face with his hands, or popping his head below the desk, he manifests his disapprobation of my sentiments.

The other circumstance I allude to is this. A certain barber was in the act of shaving a very respectable clergyman at Lincoln, at the time when the populace was returning from a view of the execution of a murderer on the gallows, at the north-west corner of the castle.

“ ’Tis a great pity,” says the operator in soap-suds, “ that the man should have been hanged.”

“ Why so?” says the minister of the Gospel, “ he was clearly convicted of the murder with which he was charged.”

“ I allow that,” says the jesuitical tonsor, with his rasor suspended; “ but he is not therefore criminal.” And in order to make good his bold asseveration, he adds, “ Why now, Sir,” beginning to scrape again, “ IF I WERE TO CUT YOUR THROAT I SHOULD BE GUILTY OF NO CRIME.” The clergyman, as might be supposed, immediately dismissed his paradoxical shaver, and never again permitted him to apply an edged tool to the surface of his visage, lest he should,

at

at any time, by an irresistible impulse, be urged to make a deeper impression.

I have subjoined the conversation I had with the labourer in hemp and flax, together with the extraordinary position of the casuistical chin-scraper, because they seem to have imbibed, from whatever source, the same principles with yourself, that "good works are not essentially necessary to salvation:" or, in other words, that "a man may commit every species of the most atrocious wickedness, such as murder, adultery, robbery, &c. and still be liable to no imputation of guilt:" or, which is the same thing, "may still be in a state of salvation." For as, in reason, where no law is, there is no transgression; so, in justice, where no guilt is, there can be no punishment. Whether the weaver be a disciple of yours, or the barber your Gospel teacher, I take not upon me absolutely to determine.

Now, Sir, as you also hinted at the meeting alluded to in the beginning of this epistle, that you were persuaded in your own mind, not only that the principles you had embraced for your future conduct in life were in themselves true, but also that you had a
right

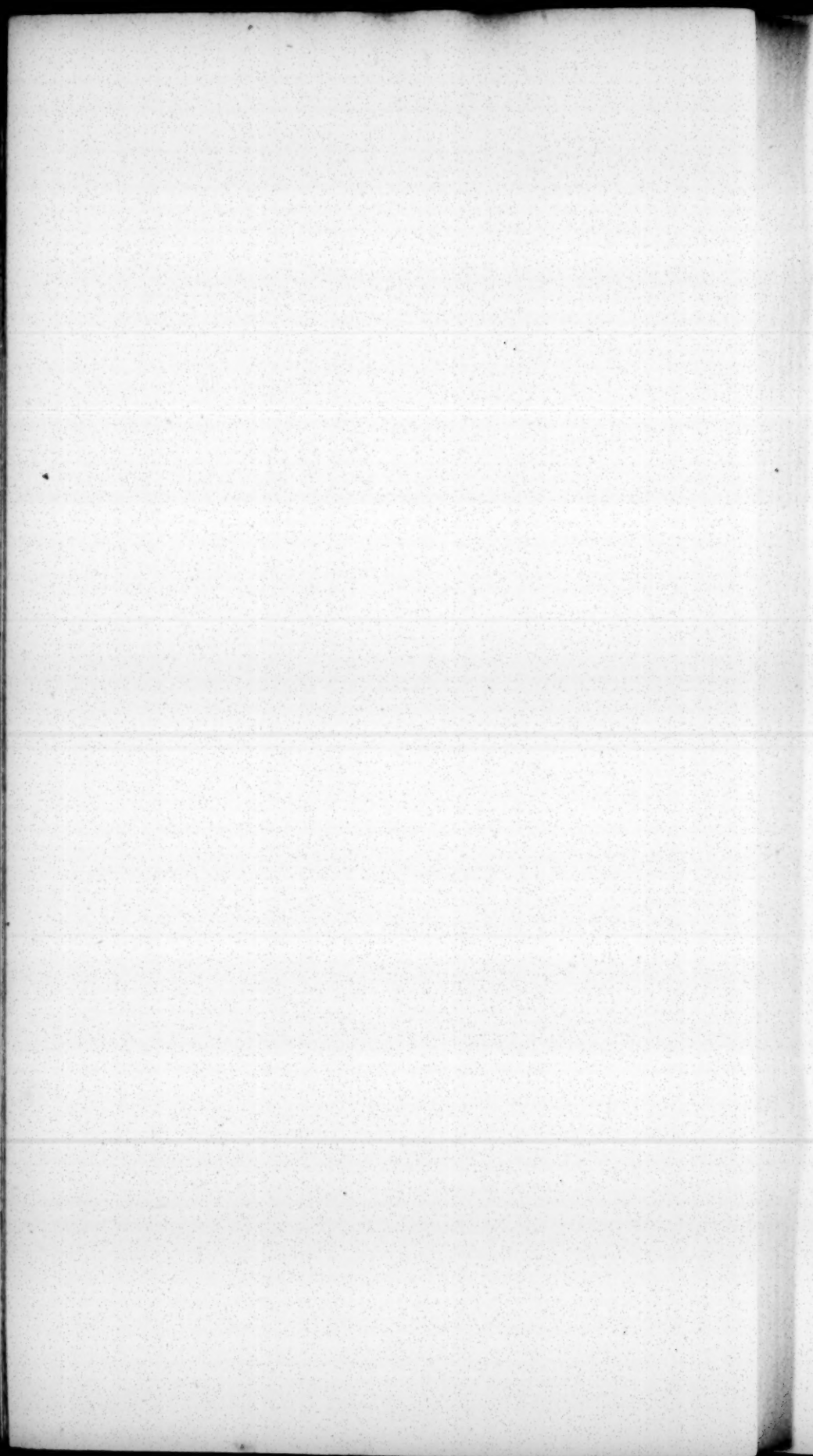
right to propagate them amongst your neighbours; I think it my duty, as your appointed instructor, as well as that of the inhabitants of Nettleham, with whom you frequently converse, to tell you in plain terms, that I look upon the doctrines advanced by you, by the weaver, and by the barber, as above related, if reduced to practice, to be in direct opposition to and destructive of ALL RELIGION NATURAL AND REVEALED, as well as subversive of CIVIL SOCIETY AND ALL GOOD GOVERNMENT. As you have already written to me one letter, if not more than one, upon the subject of religion, I shall be obliged to you if you will favour me with still another; in which you will have the goodness to acquaint me upon what grounds you assert that "good works are not essentially necessary to salvation:" what you mean by the words, "good works;" what by, "essentially necessary;" and what by, "salvation." When you shall have deliberated upon the matter alone, you may, if you think proper, consult your Gospel teacher or teachers at Lincoln, whether one or three be the number of them; for I am not afraid to encounter a triple-headed monster, directed
and

and encouraged by your skill, in the defence of what I believe to be the truth; and in opposition to tenets, which must bring both those who propagate and those who adopt them, if they be influenced by them in the regulation of their manners, to inevitable destruction of both soul and body in hell. I am, Sir, with the most sensible concern for your eternal welfare,

Your sincere friend and well-wisher,

WILLIAM HETT,

Minister of the Gospel at Nettlebam.



A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT

NETTLEHAM,

IN THE

COUNTY of LINCOLN,

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1793.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following discourse, having been announced by a note affixed to the church door on the preceding Sunday, was numerously attended. Amongst the hearers, as might be expected, was the author's adversary in the parish of Nettleham; who was seated upon the loft directly opposite to the reading desk. When the psalm was to be given out, he thought proper so far to step out of his own sphere as to take this business upon himself, that he might have an opportunity of insulting the author: and this he did most decidedly, by thundering out the first verses of the thirty-first psalm, in so pointed and offensive a manner, that several of the strangers who were present, after the service was ended, cried shame of his rude and unmannerly behaviour; and could not help acknowledging, that his conduct was little less than an assault upon the minister in the house of God, and whilst he was employed in the discharge of his sacred office.

Heb. xiii. 9. *Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines.*

I HAVE taken the liberty to request your more particular attendance on this day, that I might have an opportunity to lay before you a matter which I have very much at heart, and which has occasioned to me at different times no small degree of uneasiness; I mean, the dissension and strife, the divers and strange doctrines, which have for some time been gaining ground amongst you. *Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.* Rom. xvi. 17. This is the advice of the apostle to his Roman converts; and I am persuaded that it never could be addressed more seasonably than at this time to most of the established congregations of this kingdom. It appears to be the business, the whole study and delight of too many amongst us, who have assumed the title of disciples of the blessed Jesus, emphatically the messenger of peace on earth and good will towards men, and who
have

have taken upon themselves the sacred office of ministers of the Gospel of peace, to raise up offences, and to cause divisions in the church of Christ; to unfix the principles of the unwary, and to draw them aside from, and to induce them to disavow the persuasions in which they were educated. Not contented with being permitted to think for themselves in religious concerns; not satisfied with framing for their own belief and conduct in life a system of opinions as absurd, as contradictory to reason and the word of God as they think proper; they seem not to rest in peace, unless they have been able to cause some others to fall from their steadfastness; unless, by the exertion of every species of artifice, they have so far prevailed, as to influence others to be of the same opinion with themselves. Hence that numerous tribe of self-commissioned teachers, who, impelled by a high opinion of their own abilities, fancy themselves qualified for the instruction of others in the momentous truths of the Gospel. With men of this description, as I have almost universally discovered, the first step is, to acquaint those who are incautious enough to

listen to their suggestions, that the tenets, which they at present embrace, are false and erroneous; and that the teacher, who inculcates them, is a misinformed man, and not worthy of attention. They then extol their own opinions, and confidently assert, that they are the enlightened, the faithful; and that all who receive and are guided by their doctrines, will not, cannot fail of attaining everlasting salvation. Thus do they, like the Scribes and Pharisees of old, *compass sea and land to make one proselyte: and when he is made, they make him twofold more the child of hell than themselves.* Matt. xxiii. 15. They infuse into him, if possible, a double portion of contentious principles, and of a determined opposition to the established system of religion. From this latent cause it is, that many a conscientious minister of the Gospel, according to the articles of faith and the forms prescribed by the church of England, finds himself evil thought of and evil spoken of by those, at whose hands he has merited no such treatment; and whom he has endeavoured to instruct, to the best of his abilities, in the saving truths of the Gospel.

To think for one's self is one thing: to
endeavour

endeavour with all one's might to induce others to adopt our opinion is another thing: and to traduce and vilify those, whose sentiments are different from ours, is a thing totally different from either.

To form an opinion, by the exercise of one's own reason upon different subjects, and by the deduction of consequences from our own experience, is one of the noblest privileges of humanity; and that from which are deduced the several improvements in the arts and the sciences: the arts, which serve to supply the necessities, to increase the comforts, and to embellish the ornaments of life; the sciences, whose province it is to investigate, to explain, and to apply the elements of knowledge to the improvement of the arts. These are the primary objects of human contemplation; and happy the man who employs the powers of his body and his mind to purposes of so profitable, so exalted a nature. But few amongst the common mass of mankind are furnished with faculties capable of adding any thing to the received stock of knowledge, or even of comprehending the various and numerous truths already established by the studious of preceding ages.

And how many more are there, in addition to these, who, being obliged to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, are effectually precluded from any great degree of exercise of the mental powers; and who, therefore, must of necessity submit to be instructed in the far greater part of useful and necessary truths by the intervention of their superiors in wisdom. This ever has been, and ever will be the case, as long as the present state of imperfection endures. There ever will exist those, and they by far the more numerous class of the human species, who, being incapable of informing themselves in truths necessary to ensure success, whether in temporal or spiritual concerns, must depend upon the more penetrating abilities and higher attainments of other men for their knowledge in the conduct of life. And in most cases of moment, there are very few of us, who would not find his account in consulting those who exceed him in wisdom and experience, and in following their advice. If you, who now hear me, will only take the trouble to look back upon the several miscarriages of your past lives, you will find, that the most pernicious

pernicious and the most distressing you have ever fallen into, may be attributed to your having placed an undue confidence in your own opinion, and having neglected or despised the information to be derived from those who understood the matter in question much better than yourselves. To be ignorant is no disgrace: to ask advice is no disparagement: to do this in cases of difficulty and importance, and to act according to it, is a very strong proof of a superior share of discernment. On the contrary, to be uninformed, self-conceited, and perversely bigotted to opinions taken up at random, is a palpable instance of egregious folly.

Whatever knowledge we may have acquired, whether by our own sagacity, or from the information of others, there are few cases in which we are justifiable in obtruding it upon our companions unasked; and endeavouring, whether they will or no, to bring them over to our own way of thinking. Every other person has an equal claim to exert his own judgment and to act according to it; and therefore we are assuming a province which does not belong to us, when we take upon ourselves the

office of a dictator in circumstances in which we have no antecedent right to interfere. I will mention a few instances, in which with propriety and with some degree of authority, advice may be given, and ought at the least to be listened to with attention. A father has undoubtedly the privilege of advising his child, and of demanding obedience to his injunctions, till such time as the child arrive at years of discretion. A master may give instructions to his servant in all matters in themselves just and reasonable, and expect them to be executed. He may say to this man, Go, and he goeth; to another, Come, and he cometh; and to his servant, Do this, and he doeth it. A minister of the Gospel may, both in publick and in private, suggest to the congregation committed to his care, the various motives to a holy and religious life for the following reasons: he has been particularly educated for that purpose; he devotes a great part of his time to the study of the sacred writings, in order still further to qualify himself for the faithful discharge of so momentous an employment; he has solemnly taken upon himself the office of preaching the Gospel, the illustrating and enforcing

enforcing of divine truths for the conversion and salvation of sinners. Being thoroughly persuaded in his own mind of the truth of his doctrines, and endeavouring, as far as the infirmity of human nature will admit, to transcribe them in the conduct of his life, it is his business *to preach the word; to be instant in season and out of season; to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables.* 2 Tim. iv. 2. And the time is now come when they will not endure sound doctrine; when they cannot submit to the old fashioned terms of acceptance, repentance from dead works, faith in a crucified Saviour, and obedience to all God's commandments, but after their own whims and fancies, after their own vicious inclinations, they stir up and follow a variety of teachers; their ears itching after new fangled systems of religion, less difficult and less troublesome to flesh and blood, than that to which they have been accustomed from their childhood. Thus
do

do they turn away their ears from the sacred truths of the divine word, and are turned unto the groundless fables of ignorant and designing men, who *creep into houses and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.* 2 Tim. iii. 6. Little do these men consider the weighty charge of preaching the Gospel of Christ, or they would be very cautious how they engaged in it. To a reflecting mind the salvation of souls is the most important of all human undertakings; to be pursued with earnestness and care when entered upon; not to be commenced from a principle of vanity or self-interest, but with a due preparation and with a deep sense of the difficulty and the consequence of the enterprize. When a private Christian studies the sacred writings for the information of himself with humility and prayer, he will seldom misapprehend their meaning in matters of practical concern and of universal obligation: and as long as he confines his inquiries to these points, he may benefit himself, and by imparting the result of his holy meditations, may edify others also. But when once men of common abilities and little or no learning, neglecting

lecting or perhaps thinking below their notice the plain and humble duties of the Christian life, begin to attempt to investigate and to explain the deep things of God, which is generally the sole object of their ambition, they not only bewilder themselves, but also lead astray those who place a confidence in their researches. And thus do they become accountable for their own sins of pride and presumption, as well as for the sins of those who are simple enough to regulate their conduct by their false interpretation of the Scripture. But does not St. Peter say, that we are to *be ready always to give to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.* 1 Pet. iii. 15. He does indeed say, that we are to give this reason *to every one that asketh us*; but this restriction rather implies that, if no one ask us a reason, unless by our sacred office we are in duty bound to do otherwise, we ought to keep it to ourselves. And when, at the request of another, we give this reason, we are even then to do so *with meekness and fear*; with a degree of mildness in our words and gentleness in our manner, and a concern lest we ourselves

selves should be misinformed and lead others astray. And is it not permitted by the legislature, that every individual, however illiterate or unskilful in the sacred Scriptures he may be, may assume to himself the office of an expounder of the Gospel? This indulgence is indeed allowed, and in some cases perhaps to the advantage of the cause of Christianity; but I fear, from what has come under my knowledge since I have been a minister of the Gospel, in many more to the destruction of the immortal souls of men.

The last circumstance alluded to is the impropriety of speaking ill of those who differ from us in opinion. For one man to entertain notions different from another upon one and the same subject is no reflection either upon his abilities or his honesty. As long as men are subject to the bias of natural constitution, and to the prejudices of a particular mode of education, they will see things in different lights, and entertain various ideas relative to the same object; and no harm arises to society from this diversity of sentiment, provided it take place in matters of an indifferent nature, in

which

which the best interests of mankind, the sacred dictates of religion and morality are not concerned; and provided that men are not so perversely attached to their own opinions, as to endeavour, by every means in their power, to make every individual they converse with a proselyte to their own system of tenets; and by so doing, to disturb the peace and good order of the community, and to destroy that charity in their own breast and in that of their neighbour, which is the crown and perfection of all religion. When evil-minded and misguided men take advantage of the valuable privilege of thinking for themselves, and being permitted to propagate their opinions; and under the sanction of it, broach doctrines and disseminate principles, which are not only in direct opposition to the precepts of the Gospel, but also to the practice of our blessed Master, of his Apostles, and of the primitive Christians; which undermine the very pillars of society, just dealing and a mutual confidence in each other; surely men of this dangerous character demand no complaisance at our hands; as their hand is against every man, so every man's hand may justly be against them, if not in
a hostile

a hostile way, yet in the way of self defence. And if these perverse teachers will not hear reason, which self-conceited ignorance will seldom attend to; then to expose them to the contempt of others, as they appear, by embracing and propagating doctrines contrary to the common sense and received opinions of the community in which they reside, to hold *them and their sentiments* in derision, will not fail, in time, if not to convince their understanding, at least to cover them with shame and confusion, when they perceive the detestation in which their principles are held by those amongst whom they must live, and whose good opinion and good word they naturally wish to acquire. To speak ill of others, and to endeavour to draw down upon them the unfavourable opinion of mankind, because they may happen to differ from us relative to matters of no moment, and in which the interests of true religion, and the peace and good order of society is in no degree concerned; and to do so, even in the preceding dangerous cases, before the use of rational argument and mild persuasion has been adopted and applied without producing the intended effect, is a proof
of

of a contracted, a haughty, and an unfeeling heart; and is in direct opposition to the whole spirit and tenor of the Gospel, which throughout breathes nothing but love, gentleness, and condescension to the faults and infirmities of our fellow Christians.

Having thus far discoursed in general upon the topic of advice, in what cases and under what circumstances and limitations it may be given and received with propriety and advantage, I will now confine my observations to the particular meaning of the words of the text—*Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines*: or, as it is in the original, *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. Be ye henceforth no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* Ephes. iv. 14. In malice indeed, in the innocence and the simplicity of your manners, *be ye children*; but in understanding, in the soundness and the stability of your principles, and the uniformity and the consistency of your conduct, *be men*. He, who is *unstable as water*, can never arrive at excellence in any pursuit, whether of a temporal or a spiritual nature. You may

may observe that those, who, presuming upon their superior abilities, devise schemes and execute projects for their own exaltation in life, first adopting one plan and then another for the improvement of their circumstances, are generally at length frustrated in their enterprizes; and not seldom end their days in penury and contempt. In like manner, in religious affairs; they who, buoyed up by a confidence in their own discernment, are driven about like the chaff which the wind scattereth to and fro upon the face of the earth, first adopting one religious persuasion and then another, too often end in having no religion at all.

The doctrines in the belief of which you have been educated are those of the Church of England; and which they who adhere to in principle and in practice will not fail of attaining everlasting life. These doctrines it has been my intention, ever since I have been your appointed pastor, to explain and to enforce upon you, to the best of my knowledge and abilities: and if I have failed in any respect of the end proposed to myself, I am sorry for it and wish I had done better. And I now exhort you, not rashly, and without due deliberation, to dissent from

from the tenets of the established Church. For tho' old opinions may, from our early and long acquaintance with them, have lost some part of their relish, and new ones may promise more gratification to the levity and inconstancy of the human mind; yet, I think, it will be found, upon a thorough investigation of the subject, that the form of divine worship and the articles of faith and practice prescribed to her sons by the Church of England, are, to say the least, as decent, as devout and as scriptural as those of any other religious society. I am well aware that many, eminent for the accuracy of their judgement, the extensiveness of their learning, and their attachment to religion, have formerly, and do at present give to them a decided preference over all others. To assert that the mode of worship or the doctrines of the Church are the standard of rectitude; and that all other modes and doctrines are so far deviations from the truth, would be ridiculous presumption. Imperfection, to a certain degree, is the necessary concomitant of every work of human abilities. But let those who are so industrious in propagating their notions for a reform, or rather, as the word

reform

reform has by late experience been demonstrated to signify, the pulling down and the demolishing of the Church Establishment, first agree amongst themselves about the plan of a superior edifice to be erected in its place. Till they shall have done this, we must beg leave to maintain what, we believe to be neither contrary to the interests of society nor contradictory to the word of God. For late events have taught us, that it is more advisable to retain our present mode of worship, with some imperfections, than to run the risque of being left without any regular system of religious principles; or of perhaps devolving, by insensible degrees, into downright infidelity, and a denial of the God who made us.

As perhaps it would be too much for me to expect, that you should all follow the same mode of religious worship, permit me to suggest to you a few cautions relative to the characters and the maxims of those who may attempt to lead you from your accustomed habits of thinking.

And in the first place, I will take the liberty to advise you, not to pay too much regard to outside appearances; not to become dupes to the manners or the conversation

versation of any new teacher who may offer
 himself to your attention. Outward sanctity
 is often found to be the temporary cloak of
 inward depravity ; and there are at this time
wolves in sheeps clothing. True religion
 is of a modest and a retired nature ; it thrusts
 not itself forward upon the eye of the giddy
 and undiscerning multitude ; it courts not
 the attention and admiration of every idle
 passenger ; its *praise is not of men, but of*
God. The man who has the sacred name
 of Jesus Christ at his tongue's end upon
 every trifling occasion, may nevertheless
 not scruple to overreach and to defraud his
 neighbour, whenever he thinks he can do
 so with a certainty of not being detected.
 Simplicity of manner and cheerfulness of
 conversation are the true and natural garb
 of real goodness ; whilst affectation and
 over-strained formality in these respects are
 the usual concomitants of folly and vice ;
 assumed, in too many instances, in order
 the more effectually to delude the observer,
 who looks no deeper than the surface of
 things, into an opinion of the internal pu-
 rity of the person who wears them. *Woe*
unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites !
for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which
indeed

indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead mens bones and all uncleannesse. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Matt. xxiii. 27.

It is a common practice with some pretended teachers of religion to express themselves with abhorrence against a Church and a Church-yard. To the Church they generally affix some * opprobrious epithet; and they would rather go a mile out of their way than set their foot within the verge of the Church-yard. I own these circumstances may to some seem truly ridiculous; but this is not all, they are impious. Our blessed Saviour has said—*Who so shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it and by him that dwelleth therein. Matth. xxiii. 21.* In like manner may it with propriety be said, that, he who scoffeth at a church, scoffeth at it, and at him to whose service it is dedicated. And to avoid as infectious that consecrated soil, under the sod of which are deposited the mouldering bones of our fathers and of our grandfathers, has in it

* A common church they call, " The Steeple House ;" The Cathedral, " The Great House on the top of the Hill."

something

something uncommonly brutish and insensible. These men may, by this profane scoffing, mean to cause their hearers to desert the church and to become profelytes to their opinions. But who that has an eye to see, or a heart to feel, when he enters a church, the house of God, this beautiful and spacious structure, for instance, in which we now are, does not experience an awful sensation? Does he not seem to be convinced that of a truth God is in this place; and that they, who worship him, ought to worship in spirit and in truth? Does not the very entering into this sacred edifice abstract the thoughts from earthly and direct them to heavenly things? And is it possible that any one should be affected in the same manner, when he enters a small room in a small house, such as are and must be the preaching rooms in most villages?

It is not the place by which the audience is drawn together, but the delightfulness of the preacher, the sweet and pleasant words which drop from his lips.

Were this divine teacher to exhibit his talents in a church, in a large and capacious building, he then probably would appear in his true light. It would then be disco-

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vered that the devotion shewn to him is misplaced, and that his imputed excellence arises merely from the want of discernment or the blind partiality of his admirers. But allowing that he is endued with the gift of elocution in an eminent degree, is it possible that these wonderful preachers should be possessed of any knowledge, of any secret interpretation of Scripture which we your regular teachers have it not in our power to attain? We hold forth unto you the necessity of Repentance from dead works, Faith in a crucified Saviour and Obedience to all God's commandments; and can these men do more? Can you wish for more? Have you adopted into your lives and conversation the several moral virtues, the Christian graces we have recommended to you?

The real fact is this. These applauded expounders of the Gospel are only like other men of the same education and rank in life: but their hearers gratify the pride and vanity of their own hearts in raising them up by their patronage and encouragement above their fellows, in creating them preachers; and they are pleased with and wish at any rate to retain the flattering distinction.

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The strange doctrines against the belief of which I would more particularly caution you are, that "faith alone is sufficient," and that "good works are not essentially necessary to salvation." On the contrary, I believe, that faith alone, separated from good works, if it be possible that such a thing should exist, will not procure the salvation of man; and that good works are the natural and invariable concomitants of a true faith, and therefore necessary to salvation. In this sentiment I am supported by the twelfth article of our Church. "Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment: yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by its fruit." Thus you must perceive that, according to this article, good works grow as spontaneously out of a true faith, as any species of fruit does out of the tree which by nature is known to bear it. So far is it therefore from being true that good works are not essentially ne-

cessary to salvation, that they are the only genuine test of a saving faith. As a further proof of this doctrine, I refer you to the second chapter of the general Epistle of James; which concludes with these remarkable words—*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* This chapter seems purposely written to establish the necessity of good works, if we wish to merit the title of Christians. I have not time at present to discuss this intricate and momentous subject in its full extent, but I will leave it with you in the words of the great Apostle. *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.* Gal. v. 6. Faith in God is the chief corner stone of Religion in general, and of Christianity in particular: Love of God is the consequence of a true Faith; and Good Works, or a sincere endeavour after an unlimited obedience to all God's commandments are the effect of the united efforts of Faith and Love.

The last circumstance against which I mean at this time to warn you is, the too prevailing custom of uniting a dissent from the Church with the propagation of the principles

principles of sedition. A difference of opinion from the established system of religion, has of late years been assumed as a stalking horse to a secret determination and a concealed endeavour to undermine and in the end to overturn the constitution both in Church and State. Should any pretended teacher of Christianity attempt to instil into your minds a dislike of our present happy form of government; or, in order the more completely to effect his mischievous designs, should put into your hands and beg you will peruse any seditious book, with a view of confusing your ideas and unfixing your principles; avoid that man as you would the plague. You may depend upon it, he is *a hypocrite*; and that he and his wicked associates are *a generation of vipers*, who are attempting to sting and to envenom the breast which has cherished them, and afforded them nutriment. Sedition and Christianity are as far distant from each other as the earth is from the heaven, and composed of elements equally opposite. A true disciple of Jesus can live and be contented under the most oppressive form of government: and he, who is of too refractory a spirit to brook the mild restraints

under which we have the happiness to dwell, must be a son of Belial indeed. Our blessed Master wrought a miracle that he might not leave behind him an apparent resistance to the civil magistrate. Matt. xxvii. 27. And it is his express advice—*Render unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.* Matth. xxii. 21. In like manner the apostle. *There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God; whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God.* Rom. xiii. 1. And the apostles, as their Lord and Master had done before them, confirmed this their doctrine by their uniform practice.

Having now gone through what I have to offer upon the subject proposed, permit me to say a few words respecting myself. It has been my misfortune to become the appointed minister of the Gospel at Nettleham: a misfortune I call it; because after having, to the utmost of my power and abilities, discharged the several offices of my sacred function, I find myself abused, vilified and degraded by some of my parishioners. Why any one of them should be thus ill disposed towards me I know

know not. I am not conscious of having wilfully and knowingly neglected the duty of the church in any one respect or circumstance; and as to my moral character, it is my constant care to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. But should I be in any degree deficient with regard to the duties of a holy life, as I am sensible that I am in too many instances, this is no concern of those who censure me: and let the man amongst them, who is without a fault, cast at me the first stone. I can attribute this their want of good will towards me, but to one or other of these two causes; either to the pride of their own hearts, which raises them above receiving information at my mouth; or, with still more likelihood of truth, to the underhand suggestions of the numerous instructors they follow and encourage. From whatever cause their ill language, whether in words, or in writing, may originate; if they love railing, let them rail on till they shall be abundantly satisfied with the malignant gratification. I value not their censures. I appeal to a higher tribunal, that of *my master and their master, who is in Heaven; whose I am, and whom*

I serve. With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of mans judgment. 1 Cor. iv. 3. The first object of my heart is to discharge the momentous office I have taken upon myself, that of a conscientious minister of the Gospel of Christ: and if I cannot attain the favourable sentiments of all my parishioners by doing this, the unfavourable ones of those who may still persist in thinking or speaking disrespectfully of me, shall not hereafter occasion to me one moment's uneasiness. As to those whose good opinion and good word I have acquired, and I am happy to have it in my power to reckon amongst these my friends the far more numerous part of my hearers; a continuance in the same doctrines and the same mode of behaviour will not fail to retain their support and encouragement. Henceforth let no man trouble me. In a steady and uniform endeavour to fulfil my sacred duties, I will, as far as I shall be able, persevere to the very end of my existence: and for the completion of this to me desirable purpose, I will set before myself as a pattern the apostle—
Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things approving

proving ourselves as the ministers of God.

2 Cor. vi. 3. Consider what I have now said unto you: and should any of you be otherwise minded than I am; should your sentiments be as to the principles or the practice of religion different from mine, you have an undoubted right to enjoy them unmolested by me. But what I allow to you, a freedom of judgment, permit me in like manner, to experience at your hands: and may *the Lord give*, both to you and me, a right *understanding in all things.* 2 Tim. ii. 7.

ANTINOMIANISM UNMASKED,

A TRAGI-COMEDY;

BY THE REV. W. HETT, *A. M.*

BEING A FULL AND DIRECT

A N S W E R

TO

AN APPEAL TO THE PUBLICK,

By J. P——, FARMER.

AND THAT YE STUDY TO BE QUIET, AND TO DO
YOUR OWN BUSINESS, AND TO WORK WITH YOUR
OWN HANDS, AS WE COMMANDED YOU.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

AN answer to the preceding epistle addressed to Mr. J— P—, speedily appeared in print, dated October 2, under the title of, “A Letter to the Publick, &c. by J— P—, Farmer.” By the words, “The Publick,” the respondent or respondents, whoever he or they might be, for this important circumstance is, like many other concerns of equal consequence, involved in some degree of obscurity, undoubtedly meant all those who are of the same way of thinking with themselves, both as to religion and politicks; that is, declared enemies to practical virtues, and to the peace and subordination of society.

The Antinomian brethren, however dignified or distinguished, whether teachers or disciples, are, as far as the author can learn, to a man, the friends and promoters of Republicanism. The chiefs of this sect resident at L— were the well-known and avowed agents for the distribution of seditious pamphlets throughout the city of L— and its neighbourhood. Paine’s Rights of Man, elegantly bound, was by them

them sent to the author's adversary at N———: out of the learned pages of which, it was his practice, from a motive of gratitude, it may be supposed, to his enlightened instructors, and of pity to his poor misinformed neighbours, to select divers edifying maxims, and various truths highly beneficial to the lower ranks of society, if put into execution; and, with an earnestness befitting the goodness of the cause, to recommend them to the notice and the adoption of his hearers.

It may be observed that in the letter to Mr. J— P——, the author confined his strictures to the religious opinions of the sect; and if a fair and impartial answer had been given upon the points proposed in the conclusion of it, the controversy might never have proceeded to any other subjects besides those of religion. But when his antagonists, impelled by their Republican principles, declining a private contest with an insignificant individual, addressed themselves to the publick at large, or at the least to their party of the publick; and began their appeal with an ostentatious parade about Englishmen, and Liberty, and Slavery, and Bigotry, and Superstition,
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and British Charter, and Birthright and Prerogative, and such like Rodomontade, at the same time treating the author with a considerable degree of contempt; he thought himself justifiable in bringing forward and interweaving with the licentious religious tenets the turbulent political ones of those very extravagant characters with whom he was contending. In the appeal to the Publick, the doctrine, that "good works are not essentially necessary to salvation," is fathered, first upon the articles of the Church of England, then upon the sacred writings, and lastly upon various authors, good and wise men, of former ages. In the following tract, entitled, "Antinomianism Unmasked," the paragraphs included between single inverted commas, except where it is otherwise specified, are literal extracts from the appeal, and comprehend the chief part of it.

ANTI-

ANTINOMIANISM UNMASKED, &c.

QUI STATUIT ALIQUID, PARTE INAUDITA
ALTERA, ÆQUUM LICET STATUERIT,
HAUD ÆQUUS EST.

SENECA.

*O*H that mine adversary had written a book, Job xxxi. 35. exclaimed the afflicted Job, conscious of his integrity; for then should I be able to see what he had to allege against me, and at the same time have an opportunity to vindicate myself as to those circumstances in which my conduct is not liable to censure.

I had no occasion to utter this wish: my adversary has stepped forward, and with the true spirit of a knight-errant, has fairly challenged me to the combat. "A clear stage and no quarter," says he, "and I'm your man." The farmer has written a book. No, I beg his pardon; for I don't believe him capable of being guilty of so flagrant a misdemeanor. His Gospel teacher, his private secretary at Lincoln, has

has effected this for him: and it becomes me, tho' a man of peace, not to shrink from their united encounter. It is true I had provoked the resentment of these redoubtable champions by advancing and laying to their charge certain unwelcome truths, clothed in rather unpleasant language; and had moreover, as my opponents have expressed themselves, 'thrown the gauntlet, 'and boldly determined to encounter all 'that shall stand against me who are propagators of such sentiments' as they are. I do not repent of having done this, because it has completely answered my purpose. I have nettled them so far as to cause them to come forward with chapter and verse, and in such an unquestionable shape, that their real sentiments can now no longer be doubtful. *Littera scripta manet.* When opinions are reduced to writing, or put into print, they acquire a permanent form, a local habitation and a name; whilst words are, in too many instances, mere wind, and are, by subterfuge or false interpretation, as that merry wag Swift would say, not seldom broken with as little ceremony. You may argue with a man unacquainted with the mode of
 ratiocination

ratiocination till doomsday, and still be no nearer the termination of the dispute or the ascertaining of the truth than when you began. And this happens more especially in religious matters: he will quote passages from the Scripture, with so much readiness and volubility, that they fly about your ears like grape shot out of the mouth of a twenty-four pounder; and the only wise method of proceeding in such a case is, to move out of the reach of them as fast as one can. As to any explication of the passages adduced, he submits to none but his own; and his own are such alone as are calculated to support the tenets he has embraced.

I have denominated what I have to say, in answer to my formidable opponents, a *tragi-comedy*; because, notwithstanding the inherent seriousness of the subject in some respects, yet the idea of an illiterate farmer attempting to explain the intricate doctrine of faith and works, and of a self-sufficient hair-dresser pretending to unravel the deep, and, by mere human beings, inexplicable mystery of predestination, is an attempt in itself so truly ridiculous, that I can never help experiencing an internal sensation of laughter when it comes into my noddle;

and

and am persuaded that, in the course of my remarks, I shall involuntarily betray some symptoms of the ludicrous emotion.

‘ Friends and countrymen, hear ye my defence which I now make unto you.’

A truly Apostolic exordium, but most unseasonably adopted, as will hereafter be shewn. Besides it has the appearance of an endeavour to raise a mob. It says, or seems to say, “ Who is on my side?— “ Who?” It appeals with vehemence and animosity to the public, as though the parties, conscious of the weakness of their cause, were willing to prejudice in their favour the influence of so formidable an advocate. The truth is in itself an host; and a mob is invariably in the wrong. *Turba est argumentum pessimi.* Those death-doing arguments, a dagger or a club, are the only ones which a mob ever uses with effect. Nevertheless as my opponents have appealed to the publick, to the same tribunal I also address myself, and have not the least doubt of an impartial hearing and a just decision between us. But when I say the publick, I mean, the cool and the discerning part of that body, which can hear reason and see consequences; not the undistinguishing

distinguishing mobility, who are too often dupes to appearances, and are hoodwinked and led by the nose by the impudence and artifice of impostors.

‘ It is with the greatest pleasure I reflect, that the publick, to whom I address myself, are ENGLISHMEN ; Patrons and Sons of LIBERTY. From such, I shall have an *impartial attention* : which I could not expect, if Slavery, Bigotry, and Superstition prevailed.’

The name of Englishman is indeed a most honourable distinction, and to be the patrons and the sons of liberty an invaluable privilege. But as the sacred name of liberty has of late been assumed in a neighbouring state as a cloak for an unbridled licentiousness of principle and behaviour, and the most artful attempts have been made by *the patrons and sons of sedition* to introduce into this island the same destructive notions ; by the word, *Liberty*, I should hope is meant a freedom of action restrained only by the regulations of law and the dictates of reason and religion. With regard to Slavery, Bigotry and Superstition, terms in frequent use amongst the propagators of Republicanism, and held up as scare-crows, or per-

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haps rather as watch-words to their followers: there is no slavery so cruel and oppressive as that of a ferocious mob irritated and led on to plunder and to murder by an unprincipled and factious demagogue; no bigotry so mischievous as a total relaxation of principle in the lower orders of society; no superstition so grievous as Atheism and Infidelity in the higher ones.

‘ To think and speak for ourselves, is
 ‘ the British Charter. Having respect unto
 ‘ the laws of God and his country, every
 ‘ native of this happy island claims this free-
 ‘ dom as his Birthright and Prerogative:
 ‘ nor would I attempt any thing inconsistent
 ‘ therewith.’

My adversary’s publick avowal and defence of the tenet, that “good works are
 “not essentially necessary to salvation”, is
 in direct opposition to the law of God,
 And perhaps since the burning of Tom
 Paine in effigy at Lincoln, he may have so
 far restrained his propensities as to testify no
 disrespect for the laws of his country. The
 mock execution of that arch-fiend of con-
 fusion has had a similar effect upon many
 of his disciples: it has caused them to hold
 their tongues for a season, till some favour-
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able opportunity shall in the course of time present itself. They can now only *grin like a dog, and go about the city*. Bark they dare not; and as to biting, by the well-timed exertions of his Majesty's ministers, seconded by the general union of the friends of peace, justice, and religion, the horrible effects of their malevolence have been for the present effectually prevented.

‘ About four or five months since, being
‘ in company with the Rev. Mr. Hett, and
‘ having been often interrogated for my non-
‘ attendance at the Church to hear him.’

I did not wish my adversary to attend the divine service at the church at Nettleham, merely to hear me. Far be any such vanity from my heart. That I perform the duty of the church with all the propriety and solemnity I am able, I scruple not to assert: but still I am too sensible of my own inability, and too well convinced at how great an interval I approach that model of excellence which I have proposed to myself, that I am conscious, in this as well as in all other circumstances of my life, of falling far short of what is my real duty. But there are in the service of the church such things as prayers, and thanksgivings, and
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the word of God. Now whatever objections he may have to what I have to say for myself, surely he is not too proud to pray for God's mercies, and to return him thanks for his blessings. The word of God cannot be the object of his contempt. And whatever his opinion of me may be, the supplications, the returning of thanks, the Holy Scriptures cannot be contaminated by passing through my lips. The excellency of his adoration would not have been in any degree impaired by the agency of me, the unworthy, though sincere organ of divine worship.

‘ Being desired, I gave my reasons :
 ‘ That for the time I had attended, I had
 ‘ not reaped any advantage, therefore I had
 ‘ sought elsewhere.’

How is it possible that my adversary should reap any advantage from my instructions, if he expected to hear any thing of a similar tendency with what he has now published to the world. No. I am no propagator of the principles of licentiousness. I fear God and honour the King. The doctrines I inculcate upon my hearers are Repentance from dead works, Faith in a crucified Saviour, and Obedience to all
 God's

God's commandments. And as long as I shall continue to be the established minister of the Gospel at Nettleham, I hope I shall never so far forget what I owe to the sacred office I have assumed, to the peace and good order of society, to my country, and to my God, as to cause the consecrated roof of that venerable Gothic edifice, to resound with the irreligious and pernicious doctrines, which he has been induced by a set of deceived and deceiving men to adopt and to acknowledge. Should I ever agree with him in this circumstance, I should deserve instantly to be degraded from my sacred functions; nay moreover, to be stripped of my humanity, and, like the impious Nebuchadnezzar, *to be driven from men, and to have my dwelling with the beasts of the field*, 1 Daniel. iv. 32. till such time as I should have seen, lamented, and abjured my wicked declarations. I need not tell him where to go to hear these doctrines enlarged upon and recommended. His ingenious father-confessor, who has already initiated him, will not scruple to conduct him through the various windings and intricacies of this mystery of iniquity. Let him follow his enlightened guide. With
 regard

regard to what either he or his Oracle can say against me; I look upon their good word as a disgrace, and their ill language as the highest honour they can confer upon me.

‘ A warmth of heat encompassed him.’

Having been informed that my adversary, who is a parishioner of mine, had enlisted himself under the profane banners of Antinomianism, and that he had embraced political principles, which I very much disapproved, I wrote a letter to him, wishing to have a private and a friendly conference with him; and for this purpose begged that he would call upon me. For me to have set my foot within his dwelling, without his permission, I feared might have been attended with disagreeable consequences to myself. My well intended request he resisted, upon a presumption, I suppose, that I had no right to interfere with his principles, religious, or political. He preferred a publick debate in the church-porch, before prayers. Accordingly he came up, as related in my former epistle; and, though I had determined with myself not to exchange a word with him except in private,

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by saying many unpleasant things, he insensibly drew me into a conversation with him: in the course of which he uttered the false and irreligious sentiment I shall hereafter obviate, "that good works are not essentially necessary to salvation," and quoted Scripture by wholesale in order to make good his impious asseveration. Thus attacked as I was, by one of my parishioners, almost within the church, before a large portion of my hearers, in support of so abominable a doctrine, and hearing the sacred word of God triumphantly alledged in defence of it; I own my presence of mind forsook me: a warmth of indignation, occasioned by the brazen-faced impudence of the man, caused me to feel more than I had words to utter. If this was a fault I acknowledge it; and wish I had been so far master of myself as to have repressed the outward symptoms of my inward emotions. I thank him for his admonition, and will endeavour to profit by it in my future behaviour.

‘ It is well he does not tell us to do what
‘ he does.’

And

And were I even to do this, I am of opinion that both my adversary and his Gospel teacher or teachers would be employed in a manner more beneficial to themselves, and of much more advantage to their families, than at present they are. It is not the province of any one of them to set up for a teacher of religion; an important office, and for which they are far from being well qualified. They will instantly quote upon me, as my adversary has already done, the advice of St. Peter. iii. 15. *Be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.* But unfortunately this very passage is against them. It says that we are to be ready to give an answer to every man that *asketh us a reason*; which limitation implies, that if no one shall think good to ask us a reason, we are not officiously and with vehemence to urge our religious tenets upon the belief of our companions. Now if my adversary and his Gospel teachers were scrupulously to observe this rule, I do verily believe, that every mother's son of them would be, to the very end of their days, as mute as a *leather bedging mitten*, a *wooden wig-block*, or an

iron-goose upon religious subjects. With regard to what I am now doing; I look upon it as a part of my sacred office to endeavour to oppose and to counteract the pernicious effects of the irreligious doctrines which these misguided men have attempted, and to a certain degree have succeeded, to introduce into the parish of Nettleham. I look upon myself, as far as my abilities extend, to be the guardian of peace and good order amongst my parishioners; and that it is my duty to recommend to them, both by precept and example, the belief and the practice of the several duties of the Christian profession: and I am not conscious of having failed, in any very material instance of endeavouring to fulfil these my intentions.

As to the farcaſtical expreſſions which my adverſary has heaped together in triumph, whether meant by me to be applied in general, or to any particular perſon; they are, I allow, the moſt exceptionable part of my epiſtle: and might, without any diſadvantage to the matter in diſpute, have been as well omitted. To thoſe who may think that the expreſſions alluded to ſtand in need of an apology, I
beg

beg leave to suggest the following considerations.

An honest man is one who entertains a lowly opinion of his own abilities ; who first endeavours to be what he ought to be, and then appears to be what he really is, in the station of life in which the providence of God has placed him. A man of this character I love and respect, though clothed in the meanest habiliments ; and to such a one, my hand, my heart, and my purse, as long as I shall recollect that I am a man, shall ever be open. An impostor is one, who, impelled by self-conceit, assumes a character and a station in life, for which he is not qualified either by natural abilities or acquired attainments ; and endeavours, for the acquisition of fame or of money, to delude others into a high opinion of his accomplishments. Whenever I meet with one of this hollow and designing character, I own I feel an almost irresistible propensity to strip him of his borrowed plumes, and to expose him in his naked deformity, to the contempt and derision of mankind. Affectation and hypocrisy are the only true objects of ridicule.

And of all the numerous class of impostors who infest society, there are none whose attempts are attended with consequences so fatal as are the efforts of those who take upon themselves the office of propagating false systems of religion. The hypocritical pretences of other deceivers are directed against the good opinion, the property, or the health of individuals; and in these respects only can those who attend to their unsubstantial promises be disappointed. But sanctified hypocrites, in too many instances, draw down eternal perdition upon their own souls and upon the souls of those who hear them. It is in reference to the pernicious effects of these impostors that our blessed Master has expressed himself with pointed disapprobation, and against whom he exclaims.—*But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men : for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.* Matth. xxiii. 13.

In the next place comes my adversary's opinion of my eternal salvation. But happily for me, my future welfare either in the next world or in this does not depend upon the opinion or the decision of either him
or

or his friends. With regard to the former, I trust not to a faith in a crucified Saviour alone, but to a faith which worketh by love; and confide in the goodness of that great Being, *who seeth not as man seeth, and whose mercy is over all his works.* And so long as our happy constitution in Church and State shall be able to stand firm against the open and the concealed attacks of its enemies, I shall look upon myself in perfect security as to my temporal concerns.

‘ As to his comment on the Apostle James, it is misapplied: James is speaking of one thing, he of another’.

Were I, in the language of the facetious Sterne in the beginning of one of his sermons, to say nothing more in answer to this bold defiance than—“That I deny”—I flatter myself that the publick would pay as much respect to my simple asseveration as to that of my adversary, for this plain reason, that the words of him are not much to be regarded, who has had the assurance to support the doctrine, that good works are not essentially necessary to salvation. But I don’t expect that any thinking man

should pay so undue a deference to what I advance. As the passage is too long for insertion I refer the reader to the commentators upon it; the determinations of whom, if I may place any confidence in Pole's Synopsis of them, are universally in my favour. It is true that the words, "good works," in this passage, as well as in most others of a similar import, denote principally alms-deeds, or works of charity and mercy. But then it is the opinion of the learned Dr. Barrow—"That as, in every
 " kind, that which is most excellent doth
 " commonly assume the name of the whole
 " kind; so are those works of charity, by
 " way of excellency", not to the exclusion
 of all other good works "styled good
 " works."

' I blush for his impudent and uncharitable foul.'

I beg my adversary will save himself the trouble of blushing on my account. If peradventure he be susceptible of so amiable a symptom of virtue, I entreat he will have the precaution to reserve it to some future occasion, when he may stand in need of it on account of some of his own miscarriages in life. Were he once, by the
 visitation

visitation of God, to be laid upon a bed of sickness, the principles he has imbibed, I fear, would afford to him little consolation in so alarming a crisis. He might then blush in secret, that he had been so long a dupe to the artifice of those men whom he now thinks to be and denominates his friends, but whom all his real friends and well-wishers suppose to be his most dangerous enemies. At any rate, if the man were really in earnest, and his countenance experienced a temporary suffusion in my behalf; that I may not be indebted to a person whom I cannot at present esteem, permit me to blush also on account of the licentious notions which he has been induced to embrace, and has had the effrontery to recommend to the attention of the publick.

‘ (Although the man depends on Providence, with his own industry, for the support of a wife and family) as an *Opposer of all natural and revealed Religion, a Subverter of all civil Society and good Government.*’

Such is the intimacy of our connection with each other in society that no individual

can suffer alone: a parent, a wife, a child, a brother, and, in some cases, all these relatives together will necessarily partake with him in the disgrace or the loss which he, by his imprudence, draws down upon his own head. This ever has been, is at present, and ever will be the case, and cannot be otherwise. And what lesson ought we to deduce from this indissoluble concatenation of causes and effects, but the most scrupulous caution how we engage in any enterprize, which may have the remotest tendency to occasion distress to ourselves; because inevitably some innocent person must be involved with us in the baneful consequences of our miscarriages. To suffer for one's own folly is an affliction sufficiently grievous: but to see the innocent, the incapable of offending, the wife of our bosom, the helpless infant, who depend upon us for their support and protection, brought to penury and distress by a blind attachment to our own unfounded whims and caprices;—what is, if this be not the most exquisite misery? And how can men expect any other than to be neglected and despised in the society in which they reside, who have so far stepped out of their own sphere

sphere of action, as to take upon themselves, in open defiance of public opinion, the propagation of doctrines of the most extravagant nature, and the most destructive consequences ;—doctrines which undermine the very pillars of society, and have a decisive tendency to throw every thing into disorder and confusion ? Who are they who stand forward, unasked and unauthorized, and, with almost unprecedented audacity, call every man an idiot, who embraces opinions sanctioned by time and the concurring authority of the wise and the virtuous of preceding ages ? And more especially if they be men of no education, of no experience in life, of contracted ideas, and who have not had any possible opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the subjects relative to which they are so studious to obtrude their unformed, unarranged ideas upon the notice of the publick ; can men of this rude and pragmatical character hope or expect to be respected and had in estimation in the community in which they dwell ? Whatever their overweening self-sufficiency may suggest to them, the thing is in itself impossible. What I before asserted I still adhere to ; and

intend, to the best of my abilities, to make it appear in the sequel, that the doctrines, alluded to in my former epistle, are, "if reduced to practice, in direct opposition to and destructive of ALL RELIGION NATURAL AND REVEALED, as well as subversive of CIVIL SOCIETY AND ALL GOOD GOVERNMENT."

In the order of my opponent's letter we are now come to the grand matter of debate, whether or no "good works be essentially necessary to salvation." As I am of opinion that the eternal salvation of many may be endangered by a doubt upon this interesting point; and as I am from my own certain knowledge convinced that the negative side of the question is in some instances adopted, I will endeavour to give it that attentive discussion which its importance seems to claim. And in order to do this the more effectually, it shall be my present business to make it appear that the negative of the proposition is contrary to common sense, contradictory to reason and the word of God, not authorized by the Articles of the Church of England, or the opinions of our ablest divines, and productive

ductive of the most mischievous consequences to society.

I. It is contrary to the common sense of Christians.

What would a plain and humble Christian, whose mind is not perverted by cavils and disputes, think of this assertion, that "good works are not essentially necessary to salvation." I have mentioned it to several of this description and they have, to a man, revolted from it with abhorrence. I dare take upon me to assert, that there is not one Christian in his Majesty's dominions, who says his prayers in peace, reads his Bible at home, attends his parish church on a Sunday, and is of a truly humble and contrite disposition, who does not believe, that the commission of sin, or works of wickedness, are displeasing to God, and therefore will, according to their malignity, so far debar him of everlasting salvation: and that on the contrary, the practice of righteousness, or good works, are pleasing to God, and have an inherent tendency to procure his favour both here and hereafter. This, as far as I am able to judge by experience

perience and observation, is the usual mode of reasoning of all unprejudiced Christians upon this interesting particular. For a further illustration of this subject, I refer the reader to two beautiful and instructive essays: Guardian, No. 158. Adventurer, No. 38. These two papers are founded upon and derive their use and excellence from the universality of the above persuasion.

II. It is contradictory to reason.

A brief analysis of the first principles of religion natural and revealed.

Religion is a belief of and an obedience to the will of God.

The will of God has been made known to man by the light of nature, and by revelation.

The light of nature is that internal sense of right and wrong, which is born with every human being.

Revelation is those Holy Scriptures which men have composed under the immediate guidance and direction of the Spirit of God.

Revelation

(III)

Revelation is of two kinds, the one made to the Jews, the other to Christians.

The Jewish revelation is contained in the Old Testament, and is called the Covenant of Works. "This do and thou shalt live."

The Christian revelation is comprehended in the New Testament and is denominated the Covenant of Grace. "By Grace ye are saved through faith."

A belief of and an obedience to the light of nature is available to the salvation of those who live under the light of nature, provided they have not known and rejected the Gospel.

A belief of and an obedience to the revelation made to the Jews is available to the salvation of the Jews, provided they have not known and rejected the Gospel.

A belief of and an obedience to the revelation made to Christians is available to the salvation of Christians.

Faith in God is the foundation of all religion natural and revealed.

Humility is the rock upon which Faith stands.

Faith in God is a conviction of his being, of his truth and wisdom, of his power and justice, of his goodness and mercy, of his knowledge

knowledge and providence, of his love of what is good and his hatred to what is evil.

A belief of these his perfections produces in us a high degree of love and of fear.

Love of God causes us to wish to please him.

Fear of God raises in us a dread of offending him.

Obedience to the will of God, or the practice of goodness will please him and gain his favour.

Disobedience to the will of God, or the practice of wickedness, will not fail to displease him and to incur his disapprobation.

A persuasion of the favour of God causes to us in the present life the most exalted happiness; which is a rational foundation of our hoping for the same favour and the same happiness in another.

A sense of the displeasure of God is in the present life the cause of the most perplexing misery; which forbodes to us a continuance of the same displeasure and the same misery in another.

Faith in Christ is a belief, that he is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Mediator of the New Covenant, a preacher of righteousness, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the

the world, the Redeemer of man, his Intercessor at the right hand of God, and his Judge on the great day.

Faith in the Holy Spirit is a belief, that he is the Spirit of God, the inspirer of the Holy Scriptures, the supporter and encourager of the Apostles and primitive Christians, the beginner and finisher of every good work in us, and our Comforter in tribulations.

The faith of a Christian therefore is more comprehensive than that under either of the former dispensations.

The merits and the mediation of Jesus Christ extend themselves from the first man Adam, to the last of the human race; and the efficacy of them will be applied to every sincere and obedient servant of God under every dispensation.

In like manner, the Holy Spirit has assisted and will assist every devout worshipper, whether Gentile, Jew, or Christian.

A firm belief of, and a sincere endeavour to regulate all our thoughts, words, and actions, according to the precepts of the Gospel, aided and sanctified by the concurrence of the Holy Spirit, accompanied with a deep sense of our own unworthiness, and
a faith

a faith in and a reliance upon the merits and the mediation of Jesus Christ for the final acceptance of our imperfect obedience with God, is the whole duty of a Christian.

HUMILITY--FAITH--LOVE--OBEDIENCE
—HAPPINESS—TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL.

III. It is contradictory to the word of God.

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. Eccles. xii. 13. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. Micah vi. 8. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor. v. 21. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people zealous of good works. Tit. ii. 14. That they should repent and turn unto God, and do works meet for repentance. Acts xxvi. 20. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Matth. vii. 19. That ye put off concerning the former conversation

sation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephes. iv. 22. As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. Rom. vi. 17. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. 2 Cor. v. 17. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephes. ii. 10. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Gal. v. 24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness. 1 Peter ii. 24. If ye love me keep my commandments. John xiv. 15. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. xiv. 21. If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. 23. If ye live after the flesh ye shall

shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Rom. viii. 13. But now being made free from sin and become the servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life. Rom. vi. 22. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Rev. xxii. 14. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal. v. 19, &c. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. Gal. v. 22. In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Gal. vi. 15. Circumcision is nothing, nor uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. 1 Cor. vii. 19. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom
of

of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in Heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Matth. vii. 21. For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. Rom. ii. 13. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all God's commandments. Psal. cxix. 6. Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every evil way. 104. For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point he is guilty of all. For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. James ii. 10. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 Pet. iv. 18.

IV. It is not authorized by the articles of the Church of England.

Article XI. OF THE JUSTIFICATION OF MAN.

We

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of justification.

Article XII. OF GOOD WORKS.

Albeit Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins and endure the severity of God's judgment: yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit.

When these two articles are read in the order in which they were originally placed by the compilers of them, the one illustrates and declares the true meaning of the other; and indeed the latter seems to have been intended as explanatory of the former. The sense of them thus united, is so far from
giving

giving any sanction to the inference deduced from them in my opponent's letters, that it establishes the direct contrary position, that good works are so essentially necessary to salvation, that they are the only infallible test of a true faith; and that they do as necessarily follow a lively faith as any species of fruit is produced by the tree by nature adapted to bear it. On account of the numerous failings and some sins of the best of men, and the imperfections of their most upright intentions, it is faith alone in the precepts and the promises, in the merits and the mediation of a crucified Saviour, which is the real and efficient cause of salvation; without which faith no Christian can be saved. But then this faith in Christ is not to be depended upon to the exclusion of the good works of a Christian, as far as he is able to perform them. Faith in Christ is the source from which the good works of a Christian issue, and the fountain from the overflowing abundance of which the defects of his most strenuous endeavours after perfection are supplied. Faith is the efficient, and good works the cooperating cause, and both equally necessary, of the salvation of man. In like manner the skill of the architect

tect is the efficient cause, and the materials,
 such as stone, brick, mortar, timber, &c.
 are the cooperating cause in the erection of
 an edifice. Both are equally indispensable,
 though the skill of the architect may seem
 to be of higher importance than the ma-
 terials; yet without the intervention of ma-
 terials, he must be a wise master builder in-
 deed who could erect any thing besides castles
 in the air. *As the body without the spirit is*
dead, so faith without works is dead also.
 James ii. 26.—dead to all beneficial effects,
 to all the purposes of salvation. It is in this
 sense that *the Devils* are said *to believe and*
tremble. James ii. 19. *In Christ Jesus neither*
circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircum-
cision, but faith which worketh by love. Gal.
 v. 6. See the analysis, section II.

V. It is not authorized by the opinions of our ablest divines.

“ That good works are indispensably ne-
 “ cessary to salvation; that *without holiness*
 “ *no man shall see the Lord*; is so fully and
 “ frequently expressed in the Gospel, that
 “ no doubt can be made of it by any who
 “ reads it: and indeed a greater disparage-
 “ ment

“ ment to the Christian Religion cannot be
 “ imagined, than to propose the hopes of
 “ God’s mercy and pardon barely upon be-
 “ lieving, without a life suitable to the
 “ rules it gives us. This began early to
 “ corrupt the theories of religion, as it
 “ still has but too great an influence upon
 “ the practice of it. What St. James
 “ writ upon this subject, must put an end
 “ to all doubting about it; and whatever
 “ subtleties some may have set up, to sepa-
 “ rate the consideration of faith from a holy
 “ life, in the point of *Justification*; yet none
 “ among us have denied that it is absolutely
 “ necessary to salvation : and so it be own-
 “ ed as necessary ; it is a nice curiosity to
 “ examine, whether it is of itself a condition
 “ of Justification, or if it is the certain dis-
 “ tinction, and constant effect of that faith
 “ which justifies. These are speculations
 “ of very little consequence, as long as the
 “ main point is still maintained that Christ
 “ came to *bring us to God*, to change our
 “ natures, to mortify the old man in us
 “ and to raise up and restore that *image of*
 “ *God*, from which we had fallen by sin.
 “ And therefore even where the thread of
 “ men’s speculations of these matters may
 F “ be

“ be thought too fine, and in some points
 “ of them wrong drawn; yet so long as
 “ this foundation is preserved, that *every*
 “ *one who nameth the name of Christ do de-*
 “ *part from iniquity,* so long the doctrine
 “ of Christ is preserved pure in this capital
 “ and fundamental point.” This extract is
 the beginning of Dr. Burnet’s exposition of
 the twelfth article. In order to ascertain
 what degree of deference is due to the ex-
 tensive and laborious researches of this able
 commentator on the articles of the church
 of England, I refer the reader to the enu-
 meration made by him in his preface of the
 multiplicity of authors he consulted during
 the progress of the investigation. For a
 further illustration of this subject, I take
 the liberty to recommend “Cave’s Primi-
 tive Christianity,” and the “three practical
 essays on Baptism, Confirmation and Re-
 pentance,” by the late accurate Dr. Clarke.
 To these names, which stand high in the list
 of those who have assumed the noble office
 of being the friends and patrons of the
 practice of religious duties, I will add still
 another, the Rev. I had almost said, Joseph
 Addison. This second Socrates concludes
 his 447th number of the Spectator in these
 remarkable

remarkable words. " That excellent author of the Christian Life, Dr. Scot, has
 " shewn how every particular custom and
 " habit of virtue will, in its own nature,
 " produce the heaven or a state of happiness,
 " in him who shall hereafter practise
 " it: as on the contrary, how every custom
 " or habit of vice will be the natural hell
 " of him in whom it subsists."

VI. It is productive of the most mischievous consequences to society.

The minds of the generality of Christians are of too gross a temperament to be influenced to the practice of religious duties by a representation of the beauty, or the pleasantness of religion, or its inherent suitability to the nature of man. These elevated inducements to holiness are of too abstracted a nature to affect the bulk of mankind. A few individuals of polished ideas, whose disposition has been refined into sensibility, or whose reasoning powers have been improved by frequent exercise, may be able to see and to feel the force of these motives, and may thereby be dissuaded from an attachment to vice, and impelled

to an adherence to virtue. But this is far from being the case with the generality of Christians; with all those who support themselves by manual labour, of whatever species or denomination. The sole motives which have any permanent effect upon minds of this description are those which act upon their hopes and fears, their hopes of eternal happiness and their fears of eternal misery; which set before their eyes in strong colours, death and judgment, heaven and hell. Now should any one be able to convince a Christian of this cast, that good works are not essentially necessary to salvation, he would instantly infer, as did my parishioner, the weaver, that evil works would not prevent his salvation. This is the usual and regular mode of arguing, in cases of this nature, by all uninformed minds; especially if they wish for a plea for continuing in their favourite vices. And what a scene of iniquity would ensue if a conviction of this kind were to become general. Secrecy and concealment would be looked upon as a sufficient authority for committing every species of wickedness; and the dread of falling under the avenging power of the magistrate would be the only bar, which
would

would have any effect in repressing the mischievous imaginations and the destructive attempts of mankind against the lives, the property, the reputation, and the peace of each other.

Having now, I hope, to the satisfaction of my reader fully established the affirmative of the main question, that good works are essentially necessary to salvation, I proceed to discuss the remaining part of the letter and then further to develop the extravagant maxims of this society.

‘ But as I dont wish to pay unlimited confidence to human authority in these matters, I shall have recourse to more substantial, viz. *divine*.’—that is, to the farmer’s own authority or to that of his Gospel teacher. Either the farmer or he *has changed the truth of God into a lie*. Rom. i. 25. By their perverse application of the sacred writings, they have caused them to assert what by their inspired authors they were never intended to utter. *In which epistles, of St. Paul, are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned, ignorant in divine matters, and unstable in*

their opinions, first adopting one and then another, and endeavouring to alledge extracts from Scripture in support of all their various and different persuasions, *wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.* 2 Pet. iii. 16. *But tho' we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* Gal. i. 8. Permit me, with due deference to the superior discernment of the farmer and his Gospel teacher, to submit to their serious meditation the above passages of the sacred volume: the genuine sense of which is much more obvious than that of those adduced in support of their favourite tenet. *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.* Heb. iv. 12. It is an instrument not to be trifled with: the use of it either does much good or much harm. And those who, without a due preparation, take upon themselves the wielding of this piercing weapon, dangerous indeed in the hands of pride and vanity, may hereafter see reason to repent of their presumption, when it is too late to heal the deadly wounds they have made by their ill directed management of this divine weapon,

weapon, salutary only when guided by the discretion of the humble and the devout Christian.

‘Possibly Mr. Hett did not think of these
‘preachers.’

Mr. Hett was frequently examined and seriously meditated upon the edifying works of the sacred penmen: and he is sincerely grieved to see their heavenly compositions brought forward in the vindication of licentiousness and impiety.

‘But as I pay very little regard to human
‘authority in divine matters, myself, &c.

Hear him! hear him! ye Grotiuses, ye Lowths, and ye Hammonds, and thou Matthew Pole, the learned and industrious collector of the various opinions of commentators on the whole body of the sacred writings in seven large volumes in folio! Hear ye this cultivator of the ground, or this decorator of the outside of the Attic story of the human edifice, setting at naught all your useful labours, and casting them from them with the same degree of indig-

nation as the one would a *rotten turnep*, or the other the *end of a greasy ribband*, when set in competition with the innate intelligence contained within the circumference of their own sagacious noddles. But Solomon, who has generally been allowed to have possessed a moderate share of discernment, has fully explained this matter. *The sluggard*, that is, one who is too indolent and too self-conceited to bestow upon the most serious, the most intricate concerns a solemn investigation, *is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men who can render a reason.* Prov. xxvi. 16.

‘ What Mr. Hett will do with those already mentioned I know not.’

I certainly could explain the passages the farmer has quoted ; and were I to give the true interpretation of them, they would be totally inapplicable to his purpose. But as he has already declared, that he pays very little regard to human authority in divine matters, (I hope he is of a different opinion with regard to affairs of a civil nature) I cannot expect that any illustration of mine could claim from him
any

any degree of attention. And though it may not immediately occur to the farmer what I might be able to do with the passages in question, it does not therefore follow that I should be ignorant of their true meaning. The farmer does not know every thing: and there are many things in the line of his profession of the nature of which I am totally ignorant. The regular course of husbandry, the breeding and the feeding of sheep, the buying and the selling of oxen, with all the operations of agriculture, I profess myself to be as utter a stranger to as the child unborn. But I cannot help supposing that, from several years of study and application, I may possibly have acquired some little knowledge of the true and genuine sense of the sacred writers. As I am very fond of the Bible, and do verily believe it to be the most excellent and the most useful book that ever was or ever will be penned, and am literally convinced that in it are to be found not only the best precepts of religion and morality, but also the wisest maxims for the government of life and manners, I hope I shall not give offence to the farmer's transcendent penetration if I lay before him a passage

from the wise son of Sirach though he be an Apocryphal author. *The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure : and he that hath little business shall become wise. How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plow, and that glorieth in the goad, and that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks? He giveth his mind to make furrows, and is diligent to give the kine fodder. Then the wise son of Sirach, for wise he has ever been accounted, notwithstanding what the farmer and his friends may think or say of him, mentions every carpenter and workmaster, they that cut and grave seals, the smith also sitting at the anvil, and the potter sitting at his work ; and he might have added the taylor who handleth the needle, and the barber whose employment it is to bend the hair of man ; all these, says he, trust to their hands and every one is wise in his work. Without these cannot a city be inhabited : and they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down : they shall not be sought for in publick counsel, nor sit high in the congregation : they shall not sit on the Judges' seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment : they cannot declare justice and judgment ; and they shall*
not

not be found where parables are spoken. But they will maintain the state of the world and all their desire shall be in their craft. Ecclus. xxxviii. 24. &c. From the obvious sense of this passage it is as clear as the sun at noon day, that this antient teacher of wisdom was of opinion, that the mental powers of husbandmen and mechanicks ought to be chiefly, if not solely confined to the business of their own trade or profession; that it is entirely out of their province to take upon themselves the regulation of affairs either in church or state, for the best reason in the world, because they have not had either leisure or opportunity to make themselves masters of subjects so profound and so intricate; that it is not their business to attempt to investigate matters of deep disquisition and such as involve remote consequences; that—

“ But had this very wise son of Sirach,
 “ in whose praise you are so abundantly
 “ diffuse, read Paine’s Rights of Man? And
 “ does not that original self instructed ge-
 “ nius, Thomas Paine, tell every free-born
 “ Englishman and make it *clearer than the*
 “ *sun at noon day*, that we are all equal:
 F 6 “ equal

“ equal in rights, equal in understanding,
 “ equal in knowledge, equal in every thing
 “ — except property. *Hoc opus, hic labor*
 “ *est*. Why then should not a laborious
 “ husbandman or an ingenious mechanick be
 “ able to give as true an interpretation of the
 “ Scriptures, extempore and without pre-
 “ meditation, as any learned man in Christ-
 “ endom, or as all of them put together?”

Thanks, ten thousand thanks to thee,
 invisible power, whoever or whatever thou
 art, who hast suggested to me the true and
 only solution of this to mere human abili-
 ties inexplicable enigma. Thou hast put
 into my hands the termination of the clew.
 which will conduct me in safety through
 this mazy labyrinth. The penetrating
 Thomas Paine is the Alexander who has
 unravelled the Gordian knot of wisdom and
 has submitted its most delicate and almost
 imperceptible filaments to the survey of
 every beholder, however incurious and in-
 attentive. A man may now be in a state
 of oscitancy during his whole life, and still
 attain the whole system of human informa-
 tion. O ye compilers of the Encyclopedia
 Britannica! what a set of numskuls must
 ye

ye be, thus to misapply your powers and to mispend your time. And ye purchasers of that learned and expensive work ! from the moment you read this, write to your respective booksellers and order them instantly to desist from transmitting to you any more quarto volumes crowded with letter-press, at half a guinea each. Paine's Rights of Man, a sixpenny pamphlet, which being lodged in a side pocket made for the purpose, will be ever at your elbow as a friend and privy counsellor, contains more real instruction than will be found in the whole of this voluminous work ; which will of itself, when completed, fill a book-case, and can only be referred to when a man is in his study. Henceforward, to the very end of your days, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest Paine's Rights of Man. This is the book, THE BIBLE : and he, who is thoroughly acquainted with its precious contents, is the MAN, *in seipso totus teres atque rotundus*. He comprehends in his own proper person, King, Lords, and Commons ; Archbishops, Bishops, Priests and Deacons ; the legislative and executive authority ; an universal knowledge of things divine and human. There is no enterprise
so

so arduous which he is not ready to undertake; none so obstinately difficult which he is not able to overcome; no mystery so intricate and perplexed which he cannot disentangle, and be all the time whistling the renovated tune of Ally Croker.

Blessed days! Happy island of Great Britain! Our Queens of Sheba need not travel so far as to soil a pair of red Morocco slippers in order to hear the wisdom of a Solomon. *Quod petis, hic est.* We have Solomons at the end of every lane, at the turning of every street: they are as gnats or as grasshoppers for multitude. With us it is no uncommon case to see the soaring genius of a Newton *hanging over the plow tail*; the comprehensive faculties of a Bacon *shaping a pair of breeches*; or the discriminating powers of a Locke *adjusting the curls of a periwig*. Blessed days when, and happy island where this volume of universal knowledge in a nut-shell, this Colossus of the rights of man first drew in the vital air!

It was said, by him who was announced by the oracle of Apollo as the wisest man in all Greece, that by a long and painful course of study he had at length discovered,
that

that he knew nothing. To the supposed difficulty of arriving at the knowledge of the real nature of things is to be attributed also that nonsensical adage of our forefathers that—"Truth lies in a well." How enviable then is the advantage of every free-born Englishman in these enlightened days, who has it in his power to know every thing without any study, any application at all! When truth, so far from being depressed to the bottom of a well, floats upon the surface of every stream? Besides the knowledge attained in this summary way has invariably this valuable privilege annexed, that the possessors of it are never in the wrong. To convince them of an error would be as fruitless an attempt, as to endeavour to drive sense into a *sieve* , reason into a *roll of pomatum* , or comprehension into a *cabbage* .

‘ His weaving parishioner, whom he
 ‘ thought not worth convincing of his er-
 ‘ ror, is a character I have no communion
 ‘ with.’

How vain any effort of mine would have
 proved to convince the weaver of his error
 may

may be imagined from this sole circumstance. At the parish meeting mentioned in my former epistle, I produced to the company a letter written and signed by this very man, of three pages in folio, and addressed to me with a view of informing me and convincing me of my erroneous opinions. This letter was by *my* opponent and *his* friend and patron asserted to contain the sum and substance of the whole Christian religion. It may possibly be true, that my opponent has at present no communion with my weaving parishioner. As soon as it was discovered that this convert had been simple enough to blab out the secrets of the sacred conclave, and that he had communicated to the ears of the profane, that Antinomians *dont stand much upon works*, he was formally excommunicated from any further connection with the venerable brotherhood. But that he was admitted to a knowledge of the mysterious doctrines and to a participation of the high privileges of Antinomianism by some one or other of the priests of this sect is what, I believe, from a concurrence of circumstances, to be a fact. These illustrious patrons of libertinism have certainly behaved to the poor man in
a very

a very scurvy manner. They have taught him that a wicked life is no impediment in the way of salvation; they have pointed out and recommended to his choice, *the wide gate and the broad way that leadeth to destruction*, just set him off upon his journey and then left him to poke out his way by himself. He may mistake his road: he may fall into my hands, and then he will have all his steps to tread back again; and, according to my mode of teaching, will have to exert many a painful struggle before he will be able to enter into *that strait gate and that narrow way which leadeth unto life*. Matth. vii. 13, 14.

‘ The necessity of defending myself and
 ‘ friends against his calumnies, which he
 ‘ has falsely raised against us.’

A calumny is a false tale invented and propagated for the depreciation of any one in the estimation of others. Whatever I have related are facts. And in corroboration of what I advance, I believe not only that good works, but moreover that words of truth are essentially necessary to salvation. And in this persuasion I am supported by
 the

the word of God. *Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.* Prov. xii. 22. *By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* Matth. xii. 37.

‘ For which also consider honestly and
 ‘ impartially his own spirit and the pro-
 ‘ ductions thereof.’

The productions of my spirit are such as I am not ashamed to acknowledge; and therefore I have added at the end of these pages the two which may have occasioned the censure of the farmer and his friends. If I know any thing of myself and my own spirit, I dont recollect ever writing or committing to the press any word or sentiment which could make one honest man my foe. If productions similar to the trifles annexed give *pain* to a certain description of men; this circumstance clearly evinces *of what spirit they are of.*

Having now adverted to the epistle of my antagonist in the most circumstantial manner; and having in the course of my reflections endeavoured to demonstrate what *is not*; I will in the next place apply myself
 to

to expose to the publick what is the real foundation of the assertion that “ good “ works are not essentially necessary to salvation.” As to the attempt to support this false and pernicious tenet by an appeal to the articles of the Church of England, to the Holy Scriptures, or to the works of our ablest divines, who concur with one voice against it; this was a mere feint in order to draw off the attention from the strong hold, the fortified camp of the enemy. That the reader may know the origin and the principles of that sect of Christians called Antinomians, I will lay before him the account given of them by Mosheim in his Ecclesiastical History: which is generally appealed to as authority in cases of this nature.

Cent. xvii. Sect. II. Part. II.

XXII. ‘ While Oliver Cromwell held
 ‘ the reins of government in Great-Britain,
 ‘ all sects, even those that dishonoured true
 ‘ religion, in the most shocking manner by
 ‘ their fanaticism or their ignorance, enjoyed
 ‘ a full and unbounded liberty of professing
 ‘ publickly their respective doctrines. The
 ‘ Episcopalians

‘ Episcopalians alone were excepted from
 ‘ this toleration, and received the most se-
 ‘ vere and iniquitous treatment. The bi-
 ‘ shops were deprived of their dignities and
 ‘ revenues, and felt the heavy hand of op-
 ‘ pression in a particular manner.’

XXIII. ‘ Among the various religious
 ‘ factions, that sprung up in England during
 ‘ this period of confusion and anarchy, we
 ‘ may mention a certain sect of Presby-
 ‘ terians, who are called by their adversaries
 ‘ Antinomians, or enemies of the law, and
 ‘ still subsist even in our times. The An-
 ‘ tinomians are a more rigid kind of Cal-
 ‘ vinists, who pervert Calvin’s doctrine of
 ‘ absolute decrees to the worst purposes, by
 ‘ drawing from it conclusions highly detri-
 ‘ mental to the interest of true religion and
 ‘ virtue. Such is the judgment that the
 ‘ other Presbyterian communities form of
 ‘ this perverse and extravagant sect. Se-
 ‘ veral of the Antinomians (for they are
 ‘ not all precisely of the same mind) look
 ‘ upon it as unnecessary for Christian mi-
 ‘ nisters to exhort their flock to a virtuous
 ‘ practice and a pious obedience to the di-
 ‘ vine law,’ “ since they whom God has
 “ *elected*

“ *elect*ed to salvation by an *eternal* and im-
 “ *mutable* decree, will, by the irresistible
 “ impulse of divine grace, be led to the
 “ practice of piety and virtue ; while they
 “ who are doomed by a *divine* decree to
 “ *eternal* punishment, will never be engaged,
 “ by any exhortations or admonitions, how
 “ affecting soever they may be, to a vir-
 “ tuous course ; nor have they it in their
 “ power to obey the divine law, when the
 “ succours of divine grace are withheld
 “ from them.” From these principles
 ‘ they concluded, that the Ministers of the
 ‘ Gospel discharged sufficiently their pastoral
 ‘ function, when they inculcated the neces-
 ‘ sity of *faith in Christ* and proclaimed the
 ‘ blessings of the new covenant to their
 ‘ people. Another, and still more hideous
 ‘ form of Antinomianism is that which is
 ‘ exhibited in the opinions of other doctors
 ‘ of that sect ; who maintain “ that as the
 “ elect cannot fall from Grace, nor forfeit
 “ the divine favour ; so it follows, that the
 “ *wicked* actions they commit, and the vio-
 “ lations of the divine law with which they
 “ are chargeable, are not *really* sinful, nor
 “ are to be considered as instances of their
 “ departing from the law of God ; and that
 “ consequently,

“ consequently, they have no occasion either
 “ to confess their sins, or to break them off
 “ by repentance. Thus *adultery*, for ex-
 “ ample, in one of the *elect*, though it ap-
 “ pear sinful in the sight of men, and be
 “ considered universally as an enormous vi-
 “ olation of the divine law ; yet is not a sin
 “ in the sight of God ; because it is one of
 “ the essential distinctive characters of the
 “ elect, that *they cannot do any thing which*
 “ *is either displeasing to God or prohibited by*
 “ *the law.*”

Whichever of the two above recited
 systems of Antinomianism my opponent and
 his instructors may have adopted, whether
 that of *irresistible impulses*, or *the impeccability of the elect*, the several facts and doc-
 trines which I have enumerated and attri-
 buted to them, in my former epistle, and
 which my adversary has in reality acknow-
 ledged and endeavoured to vindicate in his
 answer, become clear and easily accounted
 for. Good works and bad works are upon
 these suppositions placed upon the same
 footing with each other with regard to sal-
 vation : a murderer is not criminal ; and
 he who saves the life of a fellow creature,
 even

even at the expence of his own, does nothing more than what he was impelled to by an irresistible impulse.

The candle of the Lord; the law written in the heart; the revealed will of God; the inherent difference between good and evil; the amiableness of virtue, and the turpitude of vice; the satisfaction invariably attendant upon good actions, and the sorrow necessarily consequent upon wicked ones; the natural and universal conviction of a future retribution according to our different behaviour in the present life; in a word, DEATH AND JUDGMENT, HEAVEN AND HELL: What are these but so many vapour-born meteors, which dance before a man's eyes, and lead him a wild goose chase in the pursuit of a mere nonentity, if he be either not a free, or not a moral and an accountable agent: if he be either the unconscious slave of irresistible impulses; or if, notwithstanding the intentionally good or evil tendency of his actions, he be antecedently doomed to unalienable election or irredeemable reprobation? If he be really predestined to support this or that character in life, whether he will or not; to what purpose can it be to assign to him any rules of conduct

conduct at all, as though he were a free agent, and were possessed of an independent power of approbation or dislike, of choice or rejection? What is this but to make God, who created man, and subjected him to this fatal necessity, the ultimate author of all the sin committed in the world? Our Saviour says—*There is none good but one, that is God.* Matth. xix. 17. The Antinomian declares,—*There is none evil but one, that is—*I hesitate to add the incomprehensible name to so blasphemous an assertion. Again, if of the elect all the actions, even those esteemed the most malignantly criminal or the most disinterestedly meritorious, be in themselves equal, and not one in a greater degree than another deserving of the divine displeasure or approbation; why do we find impressed upon every human breast, whether its previous allotment be salvation or perdition, a strong and irreversible sense of their difference? Why is every upright man cheered with the hope of reward, and every deceitful one harrassed with the horror of punishment, if both the one and the other be equally incapable of good or evil, of comparative desert or demerit? Is it possible,
even

even for an instant, to admit that a God of truth and goodness can impose upon his rational creatures so palpable a delusion? If you withdraw the foundation, the free, the moral, the accountable nature of man, you effectually demolish the superstructure, RELIGION NATURAL AND REVEALED.

And what will be left for the support of CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOOD GOVERNMENT? Take away the criminality of wicked actions, and there is instantly an end of both the one and the other. By removing this barrier, you admit every species of violence; you put a club into the hand of the ruffian and a dagger into the hand of the assassin; subordination is no more; confusion and havock, plunder and murder reign triumphant. The fear of the halter or the gibbet, of the vengeful arm of a stronger or the artful stratagems of a more crafty adversary, are the only obstacles to the execution of the most diabolical purposes. If a man can but once persuade himself, and he is the sole arbiter in the case, that he is irresistibly impelled to undertake any thing, of however atrocious a nature and tendency, *that* he will inevitably perpetrate. And what may he not be induced to attempt under the

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influence of so compulsory a persuasion?—to commit murder, adultery, robbery, or any other wicked deed to which he feels himself stimulated by a violent propensity. Or being convinced that he is one of the elect, and consequently, let him do what he will he sinneth not; the sole rule of his actions will be that inclination which for the moment happens to predominate.

Antinomianism is the consummation of Paine's system. Paine says that all men are equal; and encourages the lower orders of society to supplant and to displace the higher ones by every means in their power. For the completion of the plan, Antinomianism supplies the sanction of religion, and asserts that there is no kind of harm in all the flagrant enormities committed in the struggle for superiority: it was either foreordained to be so and could not be otherwise; or what may appear criminal in the eyes of men is perfectly innocent in the sight of God. Recourse need not be had to Atheism, in order to account for the numerous instances of injustice and cruelty which have taken place in a neighbouring kingdom: the union of the principles of the above political and religious sects will abundantly authorize the
horrid

horrid and before unheard of crimes perpetrated in that distracted country.

The Antinomian chapel is not "a shop of profaneness." It is the **TEMPLE OF IMPIETY**; from the infernal tripos of which, to the disgrace of humanity and to the eternal dishonour of its officiating priests, has issued this false and pernicious doctrine, that, "good works are not essentially necessary to salvation."

The interpreters of Antinomianism are not "a triple-headed monster." They are a **LERNÆAN HYDRA**, pregnant with mischief to the souls and the bodies of men: the baneful effects of whose principles, nothing but the Herculean arm of publick precaution can annihilate.

I cannot help feeling myself very much affected with the unpleasant truths I am obliged to utter in defence of the truth itself, against those who are my fellow-creatures, worshippers of the same God, sanctified by the same Spirit, and redeemed by the same Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: but what I owe to the *truth as it is in Jesus* is with me paramount to all human considerations. And I would not have my reader

to suppose, nor they themselves to suspect, that I mean to charge them with any intention of putting into execution the inevitable consequences of their principles. Indeed I have a far better opinion of them; and from my heart I do verily believe, that they have been induced, for want of due deliberation and by a spirit of self-sufficiency, to embrace a system of tenets with the consequences of which they were utterly unacquainted.

I acknowledge the frivolousness of wit when weighed in the balance against true wisdom. And as my opponent has kindly admonished me respecting the future use of my wit, neither he nor his friends can be offended, If I suggest to them a hint or two respecting what they suppose to be their wisdom. A mistake in the use of the latter is of a much more pernicious tendency than an error in the application of the former. And that I may tender to them my advice with as much delicacy as possible, I will not offer it to their consideration in my own words, but in those of the great Apostle. *And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands,*

hands, as we commanded you. 1 Theff. iv.

13. Had the sage informers of my adversary conscientiously adhered to this advice of the Apostle during the whole course of their lives, they would have had no reason to repent of their attachment.

To this passage from the book of life, I will subjoin an extract which was pointed out to me for their edification by a truly sincere and humble Christian. It is taken from the "New Weeks Preparation for receiving the Holy Sacrament," page 128.

Secondly, "Happy is that meekness and
 " poverty of spirit, which industriously
 " declines the rugged paths of controversy
 " and captious disputes; and walks in the
 " plain smooth way of duty and practical
 " religion; which studies God's commands
 " and labours to understand things of a
 " size with its own capacity, without trou-
 " bling itself about his doings and decrees."

Thirdly, "Too many instances there are
 " of daring men, who, by presuming to sound
 " the deep things of religion, have cavilled
 " and argued themselves out of all religion.
 " These men mistake their business: for
 " the thing required of a Christian is, not
 " penetration and subtlety of wit, nice dis-
 " tinction,

“ tinction, or sublime notions, but victorious
 “ faith and an holy life, sobriety and tem-
 “ perance and chastity, justice and charity,
 “ piety and devotion.”

Having passed many agreeable moments ;
 moments, the employment of which I shall
 never regret ; in vindicating my own cha-
 racter, in disproving a false opinion, and in
 offering to my opponents the most wise and
 salutary counsel——

May that great and good being, who sees
 and hears and knows all things ; before
 whose dread tribunal the wise and the foolish,
 the righteous and the wicked shall appear
 on the final day of retribution, in order to
 receive according to the deeds done in the
 body, whether they be good or whether
 they be evil—May he of his infinite mercy
 vouchsafe to engrave, with a pen of ada-
 mant, in indelible characters, upon the tablet
 of the hearts of his misinformed creatures,
 these everlasting truths—WITHOUT HOLI-
 NESS NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD. Heb.
 xii. 14. BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART,
 FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD. Matth. v. 8.

LINCOLN, Oct. 25, 1793.

TO ALL TRUE BRITONS,
FRIENDS TO THE
KING AND CONSTITUTION.

Tune—Hearts of Oak.

Y E friends to religion good order and laws,
Who join heart and hand in so noble a cause;
Who'd fight, bleed, and die in defence of your King,
With true loyal hearts raise your voices and sing ;

CHORUS.

*George the third and the laws are friends to honest men ;
Let's always be ready,
Steady, boys, steady,
To support laws and king, boys, again and again.*

Whilst thro' France's wide realms restless anarchy reigns,
And famine's grim form hovers o'er her sad plains ;
Peace and plenty's bright radiance illumines our isle,
Each face is, or ought to be, deck'd with a smile.

George the third, &c.

And are there those men, who, our bliss to destroy,
Would blast those sweet comforts they will not enjoy.
Their plots and vile treasons being all brought to light,
May they, Judas-like, hang themselves out of spite.

George the third, &c.

Whilst their leader Tom Paine deals confusion around,
And dashes each fabrick of peace to the ground ;
On a rock may our laws and religion still stand,
And our isle be the refuge of each falling land,

George the third, &c.

December 19, 1792.

G 4

For the fourth of June 1793, being his
MAJESTY'S BIRTH-DAY, and addressed
to the Officers of the Royal North-
Lincolnshire Militia.

“ WHEN Britain first, at heaven's command,
“ Arose from out the azure main ;
“ This was the charter of the land,
“ And guardian angels sung the strain ;
“ *Rule, Britannia, Britannia rules the waves,*
“ *Britons never shall be slaves.*

“ The nations not so blest as thee,
“ Shall in their turns to ruin fall ;
“ Whilst thou shalt flourish great and free,
“ The dread and envy of them all.”

Rule, Britannia, &c.

In days of yore thus sung the bard,
And time confirms the poet's lays.
No danger Albion's sons retard,
In arts and arms they wear the bays.

Rule, Britannia, &c.

And foremost still in generous deeds,
For Gallia's hapless race she feels :
The naked clothes, the hungry feeds,
And all their sad affliction heals.

Rule, Britannia, &c.

And

And ye, brave men, who leave your wives,
Your children—all the good hold dear.
Ye risk for us your health—your lives—
For you we pray—and drop a tear.

Rule, Britannia, &c.

Whilst Sophists vain their God deny,
And hurl their King to realms below ;
May he who rules supreme on high
Long life and health on GEORGE bestow.

Rule, Britannia, &c.

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GOOD WORKS:

ADDRESSED TO

The Antinomian Brethren,

FOR THEIR

CONVICTION AND CONVERSION.

For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Gal. v. 5, 6.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE author of the following pages humbly solicits the indulgence of the Publick, for once more attempting to engage their attention upon a topick, relative to the discussion of which some of them may have already exclaimed, with some degree of warmth, *Ohe, jam satis est!* The subject has taken possession of his mind, and he is willing to place it in different points of view, in order to bring about, if possible, the conviction and the conversion of some one or other of the Antinomian brethren. When he thus flatters himself, he does not presume that what he can advance in defence of the truth will have any the least influence upon either the High Priests of this sect or their devoted champion; who have formally renounced any allegiance to human authority in divine matters. But it may be, that there are some amongst their numerous converts, who have not arrived at that pitch of malignant virulence against

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their

their superiors in literary attainments, as to treat all their well-meant endeavours with abhorrence and contempt. And should the author so far succeed, as to convince one of these more diffident and less determined Antimonians, that *good works, or the conscientious practice of moral virtues, upon a principle of* OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW OF GOD, *and not merely because the effects of them are* GOOD AND PROFITABLE UNTO MEN, *are essentially necessary to the salvation of a Christian*; the end he proposes to himself in the present publication would be abundantly answered.

Good Works.

Vis deos propitiare? Bonus esto. Satis illos coluit quisquis imitatus est. Seneca.

THERE is none uniformly and perfectly good but one, that is GOD. Matth. xix. 17. All the rational creatures of the Deity are of necessity inferior to him; and to a certain degree and in different measures are subject to imperfections, as well in their ideas as in the execution of them. In their ideas: no inferior nature can compass the notion of pure perfection. The attributes of the Supreme Being can only be described by negatives: he is said to be a spirit, without parts, without passions; infinite in goodness, in wisdom, in power; that is, to a finite capacity incomprehensible, *Behold he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight, Job. xv. 15. —and his angels he chargeth with folly. iv. 18. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?*
Job

Job xi. 7, 8. In the execution of them : no created being is able to act up to the deficient pattern of excellence which he endeavours to imitate. Hence the aspirations of the most enlightened in all ages after what they have had ever in view, but have never been able to approach. The fair form of excellence has indeed exhibited a transient glimpse of itself to their enchanted imagination; but no mortal has ever been admitted to the divine privilege of *embracing her*. Prov. iv. 8. No one has ever been so successful in his endeavours, as to satiate the ever increasing ardour of his soul with the proficiency he has already made in intellectual, moral, and religious improvement. *Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O, cleanse thou me from my secret faults.* Ps. xix. 12. *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which I am also apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize*

prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philip. iv. 12, 13, 14.

‘ What are the works of God ?’

The works of Creation, of Redemption, and of Providence. In these stupendous operations of the Deity are displayed innumerable proofs of goodness, of wisdom, and of power. The nature and the excellence of some of these divine operations are, in part, discoverable by the faculties of man; but the far greater number of them, their causes and effects, their connexions and dependencies, are too deep for the keenest penetration, and too intricate for the most subtle discernment of mere human abilities; and are of so profound and mysterious a nature, that even angelic intelligences *desire to look into them.*

1 Pet. i. 12. And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

Gen. i. 31. My father worketh hitherto, and

I work. John v. 17. I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day; for the night cometh when no man can work. John

ix. 4. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground

ground without your father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Matth. x. 29. O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Rom. xi. 33.

‘What are good works in angels, in men, in all rational natures?’

The attainment of the highest degree of perfection of which its nature is capable is not only the duty, but moreover the inherent propensity of every agent endued with reason and reflection, if its disposition be not materially depraved, and almost unalterably biaſſed to that which is evil. This end cannot be obtained by any method ſo effectually as by propoſing for imitation the moſt exalted model of excellence. All intelligent beings therefore may be ſaid to be engaged in practices truly good and worthy of their ſuperior faculties, when they are exerting them in an uniform endeavour to arrive as near to the only perfect pattern of goodneſs, GOD himſelf, as the incurable infirmities of their reſpective natures, and the unavoidable diſadvantages of their different

ferent situations in life will admit. The good works of Angels are, on account of the superiority of their natural endowments, more excellent than those of mortals: the good works of men are, according to their different abilities and opportunities of improvement, and the conscientious application and purity of motive in the agent, possessed of various degrees of excellence. *O praise the Lord, ye Angels of his, ye that excel in strength, ye that fulfil his commandment, and hearken unto the voice of his words. O praise the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye servants of his that do his pleasure. Psal. ciii. 20, 21. And he looked up and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she, of her penury, hath cast in all the living that she had. Luke xxi. 1, 2, 3, 4. He that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever*

whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a diſciple; verily, I ſay unto you, He ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward. Matth. x. 41, 42.

‘ Are not theſe well-intended, though unavailing endeavours after perfection well-pleaſing and acceptable to the Supreme Being?’

If there be any thing beſides his own ineffable perfections which can afford any degree of complacency to the author and giver of all good, it muſt be a ſurvey of that unimpaired excellence which ſtill exiſts in the boundleſs extent of creation; or of thoſe exertions in his creatures which are intended either to improve their original faculties, or to correct and to exalt to their primary ſtate thoſe powers which have been debaſed by a perverſe application of them. Hence it may be fairly ſuppoſed that a God of goodneſs and mercy, cannot but be ſatiſfied with the contemplation of thoſe efforts of angelick natures, which are directed to aſſimilate their own characters to the divine perfections; and of frail mortals,

tals, whose object it is to renew that divine image in which they were originally created. *For if God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment, &c.* 2 Pet. ii. 4. See the parable of the talents delivered to the servants; to one five, to another two, to another one, according to his several ability; and the different rewards allotted to each by their Lord suitable to their respective improvements. Matth. xxv. 14. *In my father's house are many mansions.* John xv. 2.—*for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.* 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.

‘ But do the most excellent works of
 ‘ Angels or of men possess any inherent
 ‘ merit with respect to God?’

The duties imposed upon all rational natures are adequate to their abilities and their abilities adapted to their duties. At whatever state of improvement therefore they may arrive, they have done no more than it was their antecedent duty to perform: and he, who does not exceed the
 limit

limit of his necessary obligations, has no claim to any reward in consequence of his personal exertions. A rational agent is no further meritorious in regulating its motions according to the powers imposed on it by its divine author, than are the heavenly bodies by persisting in their primary revolutions. The former is detained within the line of duty by the opposite and concurring tendencies of reason and passion: the latter are held in their respective orbits by the similar forces of attraction and repulsion. Man is fallen from the original purity of his nature, and consequently, in numerous instances, comes short of his real duty: he therefore, much less than some other rational natures, who have not debased themselves by voluntary and actual transgression, has not any pretension to the least degree of merit with his Creator and Judge. *Doth he thank that servant, because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.— So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. Luke xvii. 9, 10. For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst*
not

not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it. 1 Cor. iv. 7.

‘ Though it be allowed that the good
 ‘ works of beings superior to man are en-
 ‘ dued with no merit in the sight of God, is
 ‘ it not probable that their pure and disin-
 ‘ terested endeavours after the divine per-
 ‘ fections are in some way or other re-
 ‘ warded?’

Every virtuous exertion is, to a certain extent, its own reward: goodness necessarily produces felicity in the possessor of it. Add to this, a conviction of the approbation of all those equal and superior beings who see and applaud every attainment of excellence. *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, &c. Luke xv. 7.* And to crown all, a sense of the constant presence, concurrence, and favourable regard of God himself; in *whose presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there is pleasure for evermore. Ps. xvi. 12.* These circumstances may indeed with more propriety be styled the natural concomitants, than the rewards of excellence amongst uncorrupted rational beings. And there is
 no

no absurdity in conjecturing, that, after certain periods of probation, these elevated intelligences may be raised, in proportion to the accuracy and the duration of their obedience, to still more and more exalted gradations of existence; to a still nearer approximation to the inexhaustible fountain of all perfection.

‘ In what do the good works of a human being consist ?’

The will of God, whether made known by the light of nature or by revelation, is a transcript of his own perfections. A compliance with the injunctions of unerring wisdom, has a direct tendency to amend the defects and to correct the vicious propensities of human nature; and by so doing to restore that resemblance to the character of the Deity in which it was at the first created. The good works of mortal agents therefore consist in a constant endeavour after * an obedience to all God’s commandments, a persuasion of frequent deviations from the strict line of duty, a regret for

* See a Poem, “ On Pride,” in, “ Occasional Poems,” page 93.

past, and a dread of future offences. The presence of these sentiments will keep alive in his breast that degree of humility and of watchfulness, which is a temper of mind peculiarly suitable to an imperfect and fallible being. *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* Gen. ii. 16, 17. *Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.* 1 Sam. xv. 22. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all God's commandments.* Ps. cxix. 6.

‘ But is this scrupulous attention to universal obedience essentially necessary to the salvation of a disciple of Jesus?’

It was the intention of the last Adam to repair that which was defaced, as well as to redeem that which was lost by the transgression of the first man Adam. With a view of effecting the former gracious purpose, he, both by precept and example, exhibited a pure and exalted specimen of
H piety,

piety, of charity, and of temperance; and enjoined upon his followers a strict observance of every social, of every moral, of every religious duty. Hence it is, that without a conscientious effort to practice those good works, which are recommended in the Gospel, as far as he is able, no Christian can expect to acquire the favour of God, and to be delivered from the wrath to come.—*For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* Matth. iii. 15. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.* Matth. v. 17, 18, 19. *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* James ii. 10. *If you love me, keep my commandments.* John xiv. 15. *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.*
1 Cor.

1 Cor. vii. 19. *He became the author of eternal salvation, unto all them that obey him.* Heb. v. 9.

‘ If the good works of a Christian, tho’
 ‘ essentially necessary to salvation, yet are
 ‘ not in themselves meritorious in the sight
 ‘ of God; to what is to be attributed his
 ‘ claim to the eternal rewards of happiness
 ‘ in heaven?’

To the free Grace of God through Jesus Christ. This inestimable benefit is called *free*; because the maker and lover of souls was influenced to it by no other motive than his own mercy and goodness. *But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Rom. v. 8. *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign thro’ righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.* Rom. v. 21. It is called *grace* for the following reasons: it is a favour to which the inherent merit of man in fulfilling the precepts either of the law of nature or of Moses could not give him any the least degree of claim or expectation: under the Gospel dispensation God has been graciously

H 2

pleased

pleased to accept of the sincere endeavours in the place of the unfinning obedience of his creatures: the exertions of Christians in the performance of their duty are supported and encouraged by the more abundant graces of the Holy Spirit. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.* 2 Tim. i. 9. *Being justified freely by his grace, thro' the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* Rom. iii. 24. *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* Tit. iii. 7. It is said to be effected *through Jesus Christ*; because Jesus Christ lived to teach us the truth, died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. He took upon himself human nature, in order to exhibit to mankind, both by precept and example, a perfect model of truth and goodness. *Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* John i. 17. *I am the way and the truth and the life.* John xiv. 6. *I came that I might bear witness to the truth.* John xviii. 37. *But was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* Heb. iv. 15. He died to free them

them from the punishment due to their transgressions and to reconcile them to God. *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed:—and the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all.* Isa. liii. 5, 6. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* Gal. iii. 13. *For Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.* 1 Peter iii. 18. *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses to them. He hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* 2 Cor. v. 19. *He rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and there continues to intercede for his faithful servants, and to assist their progress in religious duties by the powerful cooperation of the Holy Spirit. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.* Ephes. iv. 8. *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he*

ever liveth to make intercession for them.
Heb. vii. 25. For if, when we were ene-
mies, we were reconciled by the death of his
Son; much more being reconciled, we shall
be saved by his life. Rom. v. 10. Who is
he that condemneth? It is Christ that died,
yea rather, that is risen again, who is even
at the right hand of God; who also maketh
intercession for us. Rom. viii. 34. If ye
love me, keep my commandments: and I will
pray the Father, and he will give you ano-
ther Comforter, that he may abide with you
for ever. John xiv. 15. I can do all things,
through Christ who strengtheneth me. Phil.
iv. 13.

‘ Can a Christian, relying upon his own
 ‘ natural powers, effect those good works
 ‘ which are essentially necessary to salvation?’

Not by his own innate abilities, but by
 the aid of the Holy Spirit is a Christian
 qualified to perform a service acceptable to
 his Maker. Man is very far degenerated
 from his original purity: his understanding
 is darkened, so that he does not invariably
 perceive, and his affections perverted so
 that he is not able steadily to pursue that,
 in

in which is placed his real duty; and which would uniformly terminate in the greatest degree of happiness of which his nature is capable. In this state of depravity and error he can of himself do no good thing. The Spirit of God supplies this deficiency, and administers that assistance of which the acquired imbecillity of human nature stands in need. This help is never denied to those, who, by endeavouring to practise what they know to be their duty, and by an earnest desire of still further improvement, qualify themselves for its reception, and who ask for it by diligent prayer. *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves.* 2 Cor. iii. 5. *For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.* Rom. vii. 18. *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* Phil. ii. 12, 13. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.* Matth. v. 6. *If ye then being evil knew how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall*

your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. Luke xi. 13.

‘ But suppose that after the attained aid
 ‘ of the Holy Spirit, and a perseverance
 ‘ for some length of time in the practice of
 ‘ religious duties, a Christian were to can-
 ‘ cel his integrity by some gross and scan-
 ‘ dalous transgression ?’

It must be admitted that, in the eye of strict justice, no sorrow for past offences however contrite and sincere, no future obedience however exact and unreserved, can have the least effect in abolishing the guilt of a sinner. It hath nevertheless pleased God, of his infinite mercy through Christ, to mitigate and to dispense with the stern rigour of the law; and to accept a hearty repentance and a subsequent perseverance in religious duties in the place of an uninterrupted observance of them. A solemn act of repentance therefore, followed by a renewed obedience, and a trust in the merits and the mediation of a crucified Saviour, will again restore a Christian to the favour and acceptance of a merciful Creator, Redeemer and Judge. *I am not
 come*

come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, Matth. ix. 13. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. 1 Tim. i. 15. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

‘ If good works be, in the above qualified
 ‘ sense, essentially necessary to the salvation
 ‘ of a Christian; what means the Apostle
 ‘ when he apparently rests the whole of his
 ‘ salvation upon Faith or Grace, to the
 ‘ utter exclusion of good works?—as in the
 ‘ following, amongst many other passages.
 ‘ *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified*
 ‘ *by faith, without the deeds of the law.*
 ‘ *Rom. iii. 28. But after that the kindness*
 ‘ *and love of God our Saviour towards man*
 ‘ *appeared, not by works of righteousness which*
 ‘ *we have done, but according to his mercy he*
 ‘ *saved us, by the washing of regeneration and*
 ‘ *renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed*
 ‘ *on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our*
 ‘ *Saviour, that being justified by his Grace,*

*' we should be made heirs according to the hope
 ' of eternal life. Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7.'*

The Apostle, in most instances of the above nature, was arguing with the Jews converted to Christianity: who were so determinedly bigotted to their own law, that they wished to annex the *works*, the burthenfome ceremonies of it, to the Covenant of Grace. Now as Faith in a crucified Saviour is the prominent feature in the Christian Covenant; and as this Covenant was entered into by the free Grace of God, is perfected by the Graces of the Holy Spirit, and was intended to supersede and to disannull the Covenant of Works; he frequently characterises the whole system of Christianity by its discriminating properties, Faith and Grace. Not that he intends to assert that this Faith in Christ, or this Grace of God will be available to salvation, unless it be accompanied by that obedience to the precepts of the Gospel, which they were intended to effect. *For the Grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously,*

righteously, and godly in this present world.

Tit. ii. 11, 12.

And even admitting that the Faith and the Grace, which the Apostle so highly extols, be by him intended to be set in direct opposition to the most strenuous exertions of Christians in the performance of practical duties; he still only means to give the decided preference to a Faith in Christ and the Grace of God; without which, as a foundation, good works, in a Christian sense, cannot be produced.

‘ How miserably then do these men abuse
 ‘ this *great salvation*, and turn the grace of
 ‘ God into *lasciviousness*; who imagine, that
 ‘ because Christ has *disannulled the old law*
 ‘ *which was appointed only for a time*, there-
 ‘ fore we may be excused by our Christian
 ‘ Liberty from obeying the eternal commands
 ‘ of God; that because Christ has established
 ‘ for us a *Covenant of Grace*, therefore we
 ‘ need not be zealous to *abound in good*
 ‘ *works*; that because Christ has *redeemed*
 ‘ *us from the punishment of sin by the sacrifice*
 ‘ *of himself*, therefore we need not be zea-
 ‘ lous to *rescue ourselves from under the*
 ‘ *power and dominion of it*; that because

‘ *the righteousness of Christ shall be avail-*
‘ *able for us unto justification, therefore*
‘ *there is no necessity we should have any of*
‘ *our own; in a word, that because Christ*
‘ *has promised salvation to those who be-*
‘ *lieve the Gospel, therefore there is no ne-*
‘ *cessity we should be solicitous to obey it.”*

Clarke's Essay on Confirmation.

LINCOLN, Dec. 29, 1793.

AN
ADDRESS
TO
DISSENTERS.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord
is at hand. Philipp. iv. 5.

‘ I admit that if *the majority* in any state
‘ are disposed to establish a particular form
‘ of religion, I ought not, by any act of
‘ violence, to oppose them, or to behave
‘ myself with any the least appearance of
‘ *rudeness* or *indecentcy* towards them. “ Thou
“ shalt not revile the Gods (the rulers) of
“ thy people.” A Trip to Holyhead,
&c. 1793. The passage is thus in the Bi-
ble. *Thou shalt not revile the Gods* (margin,
judges) *nor curse the ruler of thy people.*
Exod. xxii. 28.

(183)

A D D R E S S
T O
D I S S E N T E R S.

*Non tali auxilio, non defensoribus istis
Tempus eget.* VIRGIL.

SHOULD any cool and dispassionate dissenter, whether he be a teacher or a hearer, after having perused the preceding pages, conclude that the author of them is a determined enemy to all those who separate themselves from the church establishment, he begs leave to enter his protest against an insinuation so unmerited and disgraceful. If a dissenter be what he really ought to be, he must, for that very reason, have a just claim to a considerable degree of respect from all unprejudiced minds.

A dissenter is one who, for conscience sake, recedes from the communion of the church as by law established; and, by so doing, excludes himself from certain privileges annexed to those who adhere to its persuasions.

persuasions. I say, *for conscience sake*; for should any one, from caprice, the love of novelty, a disappointed ambition, or any other motive still more unworthy, withdraw himself from the general society, he forfeits that right to esteem which he had otherwise possessed. Now he who foregoes certain advantages, because he cannot conscientiously assent to the conditions upon which alone they are to be attained, will, as we may fairly presume, be equally scrupulous in all other respects. The probability is, that he will as readily, and with the same degree of circumspection, exert the discriminating powers of his mind in the appreciation of every other object which solicits his attention; and that when, to the best of his abilities, he has decided what is true and right, suitable to his character as a man and a Christian, he will adhere to it with as firm and determined a resolution. His universal rule of action will be,

Nil conscire sibi, nullâ pallefcere culpâ. Horace.

And who can contemplate sentiments of the above elevated nature, and not feel within his breast a degree of respect for the person in whom they reside.

The above description includes those dissenters only, who are such upon principle, and from the well-grounded conviction of their own minds. But it is a known fact that the number of those who adopt this or that persuasion, after having duly deliberated upon its truth, weighed its consequences, and balanced it against the justness of other systems of tenets of a similar nature, is very small, when compared with that of those, who assume opinions they know not why, and are members of this or that religious society, because their immediate predecessors were so before them, or follow modes of faith as they do modes of dress, in compliance with the example of their contemporaries. In the present case, it is no part of the question whether the tenets of the established church or those of the dissenter be preferable on account of their nearer affinity to the truths of the Gospel: he who acquiesces in either the one or the other, without previous examination or preference founded upon conviction, has no just pretension to any share of merit on account of the excellence of his principles. Whatever is done by accident can never afford the least title to commendation:

mendation: churchmen and dissenters stand in this respect upon the same ground. In like manner a conscientious dissenter and a conscientious churchman are equally objects of esteem and respect; because they are equally honest men, and are alike induced, by paying a due deference to the superior qualities of their nature, the faculty of reason and a propensity to that which is best, to regulate the general tenor of their belief and practice: with this sole difference in favour of the dissenter, that he, in the pursuit of his object, foregoes advantages of which the churchman participates.

Having placed the dissenter upon principle in that amiable point of view which the superior excellence of his character demands, we will now direct our attention to his privileges and his duties; whether he be considered as an individual of that society in which he lives, or as a subject of that government which secures his person and protects his property.

If a dissenter conduct himself with decency and propriety in the civil community of which he is a member, he is undoubtedly entitled to all that deference and respect which an inoffensive deportment ought invariably

invariably to conciliate to every human being. For his private sentiments upon subjects civil or ecclesiastical he is accountable to God alone: and if the practices, which are the consequence of these notions, do not infringe upon the peace and the comfort of his neighbour, neither the one nor the other ought to subject him to the unfavourable opinion, the censorious language, or the injurious treatment of those who are united with him in the bonds of society.

But if, not contented with the humble station of a private Christian, a dissenter take upon himself the office of a teacher of religion, of a propagator of the tenets he professes; he then increases the sphere of his agency, and subjects himself to corresponding obligations. It is no crime to attempt to instruct others in what we believe to be the truth; it is rather an honourable undertaking. We were linked together in society that we might be useful to each other: and in what way can one human being contribute more effectually to the advantage of another, than by pointing out to him and leading him into the paths of truth and righteousness. But he, who would do this with a prospect of success,

cess, ought himself to be *well-informed in the real nature* of what he professes to teach, to proceed in his undertaking *with mildness and a due regard for the opinions of others*, and more particularly to guard against *the dissemination of such principles as are subversive of the peace and good order of society*. Thus qualified, and under these restrictions, a teacher of religion, of whatever persuasion he may be, can never do amiss. The improvement of his hearers in the saving truths of the Gospel being his principal concern, he will accommodate his instructions to their capacities and their exigencies; and will recommend to their attention and practice the sublime truths and the amiable graces of the Christian profession. He will consider every fellow labourer in the vineyard of Christ as pursuing the same good end with himself, though by somewhat different means, and consequently will think well of his endeavours, and will patronize and encourage his exertions.

With respect to the superior orders of dissenters; their claim to a high degree of proficiency in the various departments of science, as well as the different walks of literature, sacred and profane, must be readily

readily admitted by every one who has any tolerable acquaintance with the past or the present state of information in this kingdom. But still let it not at the same time be taken for granted, that with them are exclusively deposited all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Their allowed excellence in this respect has been at the least equalled, if not exceeded, by the bright luminaries of the established church, whether we have recourse to the generations now no more, or contemplate that which is now passing in review before our eyes. To controvert received opinions, to detect their fallacies, and to expose their inconsistencies has in it something of a spirit of enterprize which never fails to seem specious, and is wonderfully gratifying to that attachment to novelty, which invariably adheres to the human mind. And he who engages in this arduous undertaking, exhibits the appearance at least of a profound discernment, and a laudable concern for the discovery of the truth. But in too many instances these appearances are the mere shadow of a shade: the abilities of the advocate for reformation being nothing more than the petulant forwardness of self-conceit; and his

his love of improvement either a fondness for captiousness and contention, or an unrestrained desire to make a figure in the world, even at the expence of that truth and of that virtue for which he stands forth as an advocate, and which, with so determined an earnestness, he pretends to recommend. The human intellect is, in these superabundantly enlightened days, become so self-sufficient, so impatient of control, and so capable of deciding upon all possible truth, by intuition, as it were, and without the now-antiquated aid of elaborate study and patient investigation, that a cautious inquirer will think it prudent to pause a moment, before he coincides with the predominant rage for innovation; and will prefer the retaining of his old *mumpsimus* with conviction and peace, to the adoption of the new *sumpsimus*, with all its concomitant evils of disorder and confusion; and perhaps, in the end, with the loss of the very advantages proposed by the exchange.

After having attributed to the more elevated ranks of dissenters their just title to an extensive share of natural abilities and acquired attainments, what shall we say of that

that numerous order of expounders of the Gospel, the preaching mechanicks of this kingdom. These men, as they are conscious to themselves that they do not possess, so they generally hold in contempt all literary acquisitions, and not seldom all learned men. According to their own account, they are enabled to comprehend and to unfold, for the edification of their hearers, the momentous truths of the Holy Scriptures, not by an application to the laborious researches of commentators, but by a much more ready and infallible method, that of inspiration. Relative to the want of learning, and the reputed divine illumination of the teachers of religion commonly called Methodists, I cannot do better than adduce the testimony of J. Lackington; who from his long and intimate acquaintance with their principles and practices may be justly admitted as a competent evidence in the present case.

‘ Mr. Wesley, having divided Great
 ‘ Britain into circuits at those conferences,
 ‘ he appointed preachers to every circuit
 ‘ for the following year; and as he well
 ‘ knew the general want of abilities amongst
 ‘ his

‘ his preachers, he limited their time of
 ‘ preaching in one circuit to a year; and
 ‘ so, in some measure, made up the want of
 ‘ abilities by variety, &c.’ Life, last edit.
 pag. 327.

‘ But as these heavenly teachers only
 ‘ speak as the spirit giveth them utterance,
 ‘ of course all human learning is entirely
 ‘ superfluous!’ page 240.

Whoever will amuse himself by a perusal of the truly interesting narrative of his own life, published by J. Lackington, will be informed in these entertaining memoirs, that the teachers of Methodism are, in numerous instances, indeed inspired by the same motives with which artful or weak minds are generally instigated, those of indigence, idleness, self-sufficiency, or a pitiable imbecillity.

In like manner the Antinomian brethren, whose principles are exhibited in the former pages of this work, are equally ignorant, and enthusiastick; and in addition neglect and despise all human aid towards the understanding of the Holy Scriptures. The following are literal quotations from an Antinomian tract called, “Theological
 “Converse”,

Converse", published by one Robinson, late Bishop of this sect.

‘ My own *experience* serves in proof to
 ‘ the *truth* of the *particulars* advanced:
 ‘ they being what I have *tasted* and *handled*
 ‘ of the WORD OF LIFE; and in the holding
 ‘ forth of which I am divinely supported;
 ‘ and enabled with the boldness and faith-
 ‘ fulness to make known, in my *rustic* style,
 ‘ the *mystery* of godliness; (viz. The *mystery*
 ‘ of God, *even* the Father of Christ,) so far
 ‘ as I am given to *know* of it, and *ex-*
 ‘ *perience* its divine power in my soul; and
 ‘ in which I know is contained the *hidden*
 ‘ wisdom, and *counsel* of God, for the eter-
 ‘ nal salvation of *mankind* in Christ Jesus
 ‘ our Lord.

‘ But Truth’s *faithful Witness* yet *pro-*
 ‘ *phesy clothed in sackcloth*—Nevertheless,
 ‘ *ye my brethren and friends*, who know the
 ‘ Truth as it is in Jesus, and are set free by
 ‘ it; you, (I say,) will not judge according
 ‘ to *appearance*, but will judge *righteous*
 ‘ *judgement*.

‘ And should the haughty *Monarchs* of
 ‘ *Assyria*, by their proud *Rab-shakehs* at-
 ‘ tempt to invade our *rights*, and ridicule

I

‘ our

‘ our *profession*; I would they knew that,
 ‘ in so doing they *reproach* the living God
 ‘ in us, who well knows their *abode*, their
 ‘ *going out*, and their *coming in*, with all
 ‘ their *furiously bellish rage*; and who as-
 ‘ suredly will (in his due time) send such a
 ‘ *blast* upon them, as shall *consume, destroy*,
 ‘ and utterly cause to *perish*, all their *en-*
 ‘ *mity* and *rage* against us; and ever save
 ‘ us, who trust in him, from the *malignant*
 ‘ *Spirit and power*; and so work, that all
 ‘ the kingdoms of the earth may know
 ‘ that the Lord is THE GOD, even he only.
 ‘ In that day there shall be one LORD, and
 ‘ his name One. Zech. xiv. 9. Preface,
 ‘ page v. vi. vii.

‘ Thus I have given you my *ideas* of
 ‘ righteousness; as found in the Scriptures:
 ‘ and that according to the discovery
 ‘ *shewed* to me in the Mount.’ page 110.

These teachers, whether Methodist or
 Antinomian, by their avowed deficiency in
 every species of human learning, and from
 the utter contempt of it professed by the
 latter, seem to be possessed of the justly
 exploded notion, that ignorance is not only
 the mother of devotion, but moreover of
 inspiration,

inspiration, as well as of every other valuable quality. But it would be a difficult matter to prove, that a want of knowledge is the best qualification of a teacher of any kind; much less of one who assumes the sacred office of explaining the conditions, and inculcating the duties necessary for the attainment of everlasting salvation. At any rate, if this maxim be true in religious concerns, it is false in all other objects of rational contemplation: in which it universally holds good, that to be thoroughly acquainted with the sentiments of the well-informed upon any subject by them particularly considered, is the best human method of attaining the real truth. As to the pretence of these teachers to be the more appropriate followers of our Saviour and his Apostles, and their presumption in ascribing to themselves the same degree of inspiration, because forsooth they resemble our blessed Master and his disciples in their poverty and the meanness of their apparel; we must have more convincing proofs than these before we admit of their plea for the more immediate presence of God's Holy Spirit. *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly*
I 2
they

they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?—Wherefore by THEIR FRUITS ye shall know them. Matth. vii. 10, 16—20.

In all our inquiries after the truth, it is nothing more than reasonable and candid to allow to preceding or cotemporary competitors in the same honourable pursuit their due share of merit; and, convinced that we ourselves are fallible, to bestow upon others that degree of respect and attention with which we hope to be indulged. There is still no reason to pay that deference to the authority of any human being, however highly and justly celebrated for his integrity and sagacity, as to receive his *ipse dixit* for a demonstration, or to embrace his opinions as incontestible. *Amicus Plato; amicus Socrates; sed magis amica veritas.* The truth has universally and without exception the first claim to regard; nevertheless Plato and Socrates, ingenious, learned, and industrious men, who have exerted their talents in the investigation of the real nature of things, ought not to be deprived of their just share of consideration.

These

These general reflections are intended to introduce a censure upon the conduct of some of the more learned dissenters; who have been to a very blameable degree deficient in candour and liberality towards the professors of the established doctrines. The Church has been assailed on all sides by a number of combatants at once let loose upon her. Her articles of faith, her mode of worship, her ministers have each in their turns been baited; and with all the arts of ingenuity and misrepresentation rendered objects of contempt to the undiscerning multitude; who would by the same means be as readily induced to disclaim the tenets of those who are so studious to pervert their understandings and to prejudice them in their own favour. This unremitted attack has been carried on partly under the masked batteries of reviews and magazines; partly by the regular approaches of formal argumentation, and of an appeal to the Scriptures, and the authority of the primitive Church; and partly by the popguns of twopenny and penny tracts industriously dispersed amongst the unlearned for their edification. Were the tenets of the establishment as false in themselves and

as pernicious in their consequences as are those of Paganism, a more ardent desire of eradicating them, and of supplying their place with doctrines more suitable to the principles of the Gospel could not have been manifested. If we who adhere to the persuasions of the Church be not led into the right way of thinking, our ignorance cannot be imputed to a want of instructors, or to a deficiency of zeal in those who take upon themselves this friendly office; who appear by their unceasing and reiterated exertions to consider us either as incorrigible boobies or inflexible bigots. But were we to adopt a system of opinions recommended to our choice by one party of our opponents, we might not, upon the whole, be one jot nearer the truth; and should still be encompassed by an equally numerous host of enemies. And we cannot help seeing and lamenting, that too many of our advisers are indeed actuated by a zeal, but not according to godliness. Violence and clamour, intrigue and faction may overawe, but can never convince; and that cause may with some degree of probability be presumed to be not a very good one, which stands in need of
aids

aids so preposterous and so inadequate to the end proposed. With what an acrimonious and persevering animosity against the established church, and indeed against * all establishments except that of their own system of opinions, some dissenters, high in literary fame, have passed the chief part of their lives, is so notorious, that it is needless to mention their names or to enumerate their labours: if peradventure their works of the above digladiating tendency be not almost without number. A conduct of this kind has rather the appearance of concealed malice and a disappointed ambition than of a sincere regard for the propagation of the truth. And the settled rancour with which too many of those, who are denominated preaching mechanicks, treat the regular clergy, and that more especially since the industrious circulation of the restless notions of liberty and equality, is too well known to those who are so unfortunate as to have them gain ground within the circuit of their labours. Rational argument and dispassionate investigation are the only efficacious and the only justifiable methods

* See " Occasional Poems," page 91.

of establishing and bringing into general acceptation any particular opinions: and when men see the flash and hear the roar of tumultuous contention, they are so far from being thereby induced to throw off the modes of belief and practice to which they have been long habituated, that, fearful of the destructive nature of the impending storm, they generally draw them the more closely around them.

In addition to being well informed and temperate in opposition, it becomes those who broach new opinions to be particularly upon their guard, lest the principles they adopt and endeavour to recommend should be subversive of the peace and good order of society. The genuine effect of religion natural and revealed is, by promoting and encouraging universal righteousness, to produce peace on earth and good will amongst men. There is not a single moral virtue or a Christian grace, whether it respect our duty to God, our neighbour, or ourselves, which has not a direct tendency to make us happy in our own breasts, and to cause us, by the practice of it, to contribute to the real and lasting advantage of all those with whom we are connected in society.

The

The peace and the welfare of his creatures are the sole object of all the merciful injunctions of our wise, and great, and good Creator.

The higher orders of dissenters, being in general professed admirers of what is rational and suitable to the dignity of human nature, have seldom been deficient in recommending the grand offices of morality. Indeed the Christian duties of Piety towards God, Charity to our fellow-creatures, and Temperance with regard to ourselves, are, in the sacred volume, displayed, both by precept and example, in such large and legible characters, that *he who runs may read them ; and the wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err therein.* These duties, being not only recommended in the Scriptures, but by all writers upon moral subjects, profane as well as sacred ; and being at the same time so congenial as they are to the nature of man, unless it be to a very low degree debased by long-continued habits of vice ; their universal obligation, one would have thought, could never have been questioned ; nor any thing advanced, by the teachers of Christianity more especially, which would in the least degree

interfere with the general practice of them. And yet this has been done in a deplorable manner in more than one instance.

It is a common, though a profane saying, "The more Saint, the more Devil." With some dissenters of the lower order the converse of the proposition seems to have been adopted, "The more Devil, the more Saint:" or, in other words, by how much the more abominably wicked a man is before his conversion, to so much a higher pitch of purity and perfection he will arrive when he comes to the knowledge of the truth, and is, by whatever means, induced to abjure and to forsake the unrighteousness of his doings. This notion has a manifest tendency to encourage men to persist in their abandoned courses, and to become the more desperately wicked; that they may thereby be exalted, after reformation, to a more exemplary state of goodness, and may acquire in a proportionably higher degree, the favour of God.

That the garb of sanctity has been too often assumed in order the more effectually to perpetrate the most diabolical purposes is a melancholy truth, which every thinking man cannot help acknowledging and lament-

lamenting; but this flagrant abuse of what is most excellent is no reason why the vilest principles and the most profligate practices should be reputed the most eligible qualifications for a future advancement in holiness and purity. The greatest degree of proficiency in any art or science is, in general and with very few exceptions to the contrary, made by those, who begin to learn the principles of it in early life, and continue their labours without any very material interruption. Patient application and persevering industry are the more prevailing means of arriving at eminence in all human pursuits. And the same causes will produce the same effects when applied to the regulation of life and manners. A being prone to evil cannot begin the practice of virtue at too early a period: good principles and a corresponding conduct rendered familiar in youth are the surest foundation of a future progress in religion, and of a peaceful and honourable old age. *The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.* Prov. xvi. 31. On the contrary, habits of wickedness, when confirmed by length of time, are with great difficulty shaken off, and, in

too many instances, *bring down the grey hairs with sorrow and dishonour to the grave. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, when the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. Eccles. xii. 1. Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, who are accustomed to do evil. Jerem. xiii. 23.* “ Acquaint thyself now
 “ with God, the author and the giver of all
 “ the good things thou enjoyest. Offer
 “ unto him the first fruits of thy life, thy
 “ youth, thy health, thy yet-unimpaired
 “ faculties. In a state of indifference thou
 “ canst not live: under the banners of vir-
 “ tue or of vice thou must of necessity
 “ enlist thyself. Defer not then the tri-
 “ bute of thy gratitude for all the blessings
 “ of the Almighty till the maladies of old
 “ age overtake thee, and the days of en-
 “ joyment are vanished to return no more.
 “ Habits confirmed in early years extend
 “ their influence to futurity: and when thy
 “ strength is decayed, and thy active pow-
 “ ers have lost their energy, it will then
 “ be extremely difficult, indeed next to
 “ impossible, to rescue thyself from the
 “ dominion

“ dominion of those vicious indulgences,
 “ to which thou hast been long accustom-
 “ ed, and to renew thy heart to virtue and
 “ to peace.”

A second and a still more pernicious opinion is, that which invalidates the necessity of the whole system of religious duties; which asserts that Christ having done all for us, we have no need to do any thing for ourselves; that the integrity or the viciousness of our lives has not the least influence over our future destination: and that the righteous and the wicked stand precisely upon the same ground as to everlasting happiness in another world. This is taking away the strongest motive to a holy life, the favour or the displeasure of God and a future state of rewards and punishments: it gives all possible encouragement to the practice of every species of wickedness, and by so doing undermines the very existence of civil society. The notion immediately preceding gives a sanction to a wicked life for a certain time, but the present one authorizes iniquity and violence to the very termination of our earthly existence. Having in the foregoing pages of this volume combated this dangerous doctrine, and endeavoured

deavoured to establish the necessity of having regard to all God's commandments, if we wish to attain the eternal rewards of happiness in heaven, I shall not repeat here what I have there advanced; but will subjoin a few printed authorities of the above opinion.

‘ One of these righteous men, after passing some encomiums on me for my moral character, assured me that I had by no means fallen so low as many of God’s children had fallen; but fall as low as they possibly can, says he, they are still God’s children; for although they may be black with sin, they are fair within.”

‘ He then read to me the following passage out of a pamphlet, written against Mr. Fletcher by Mr. R. Hill.’ “ David stood as completely justified in the everlasting righteousness of Christ, at the time when he caused Uriah to be murdered, and was committing adultery with his wife, as he was in any part of his life. For all the sins of the elect, be they more or be they less, be they past, present, or to come, were for ever done away. So that every one of those *elect* stand spotless in the sight of God”! ‘ Is

‘ not

' not this a very comfortable kind of doc-
 ' trine? The pernicious consequences of
 ' such tenets impressed on the minds of the
 ' ignorant followers of these quacks in
 ' religion, must be obvious to every per-
 ' son capable of reflection. They have
 ' nothing to do but to enlist themselves in
 ' the band of the elect, and no matter then
 ' how criminal their life!' Life of Lack-
 ' ington, page 276 and 7.

' These testimonies *fully, sufficiently* shew
 ' that the will of God in the redemption of
 ' sinners is done by Jesus Christ: and that
 ' according to all the intents and purposes
 ' of the divine will:—to the presenting the
 ' redeemed to God *without* spot, or stain
 ' of sin; and every pre-requisite thereto is
 ' found in Christ; without considering the
 ' good works of the redeemed as *furthering*,
 ' or their evil works as *hindering* the said
 ' Redemption.' Theological Converse;
 page 101.

' What in life can influence others to
 ' hold Redemption Universal on the *condi-*
 ' *tion* of good works?' page 113.

To this self-sufficient quere of the author
 of Theological Converse, by way of an-
 swer,

swer, I will annex a quotation from Dr. Waterland's commendatory preface to the second edition of the valuable discourses of James Blair, M. A. upon our Saviour's sermon on the Mount.

“ Of the value of good works.

“ I am apprehensive, that by our unwary confutation of the *Papish* errors concerning Merit and Supererogation, we have too much depreciated *good works* themselves. Whereas it is most certain, they ought to be highly had in estimation; not only as the genuine *signs* and *fruits* of a lively faith, but as necessary *conditions* of salvation; and not only of salvation, but of our *growth* in *grace* and of our advancement to *higher degrees* of glory.” Here, very briefly and justly, is pointed out a dangerous *extreme*, with the rise and occasion of it, and the proper cure for it, or correction of it.

‘ For the justifying the term *Conditions*, the reader, who has any scruple, may consult Bishop Bull in his *Harmonia*, &c. and Bishop Stillingfleet in his answers to Mr. Lobb.” page 10.

And

And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

1 Pet. iv. 18. According to the above cited authorities, in the same place with the righteous. *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* Matth. xxv. 46. No, say these profane teachers, it shall not be so; for the wicked and the righteous shall both equally share the blessings of eternal life.

In a professed address to dissenters, were a writer to advance the following as a formal proposition, “that there is not the least connexion between a difference in religious tenets from the established church, and the dissemination of the principles of sedition for the subversion of the constitution in church and state;” such a declaration would by some be deemed nugatory, by others inapplicable. Search the Scripture, say the former; examine the Gospel from the one end to the other, and you will not find, through the whole extent of it, one single passage, or one example of our blessed Master, or of his Apostles, which gives the least colour of an encouragement to destroy, by concealed or by open attempts, that form of government

government under which a christian may happen to live. On the contrary, a peaceable and conscientious subjection to lawful authority, in all things not contrary to the known and acknowledged will of God, is largely inculcated and earnestly recommended. The latter might come forward and assert, that the dissenters are the most loyal of his Majesty's faithful subjects, and that they are utterly immaculate as to the aspersions of disaffection malevolently thrown out against them.

However studious dissenters may be to exonerate themselves from the imputation of a want of attachment to the constitution as by law established, plain facts, which cannot be controverted, must be allowed to speak for themselves. That to propagate the principles of sedition is directly contrary to the whole tenor of the sacred writings, and that those dissenters, who read the bible with attention, and with a view of improvement, can never be engaged in this disastrous undertaking, is readily admitted. But so long as the turbulent exertions of a P—l—y and a P—e shall be recollected: so long as the Republican reviews, the avowed and well-known works
of

of dissenters, shall continue the monthly practice of retailing their levelling principles, and of depreciating, by every art of sarcasm and of sophistry, almost indiscriminately and without exception, the labours of those writers who employ their pens in the defence of our happy constitution, and of the measures adopted by government; every man of common reflection will judge for himself, notwithstanding the most ardent and repeated asseverations, what are the real views of a considerable body of those who think themselves the more learned of the dissenters.

As to the political principles of preaching mechanicks; these illiterate expounders in general not being able to commit their sentiments to writing, much less to select and to arrange them for the press; their influence is in most instances circumscribed within the narrow circuit of their own personal exertions. But within this compass, small as it is, they may become, as in fact they have done in one instance at the least, the industrious agents for the dispersion of seditious writings, in compliance with the directions of their superiors in the same
 mischievous

mischievous employment. And what a solecism in the regular subordination of society, that a city, in which are established two respectable bodies corporate, the one ecclesiastical, the other civil, should for some time, be held in a state of trepidation and alarm, by the underhand machinations of three or four preaching mechanicks, members of that numerous body, the * *quam non jessimas*, of this kingdom. Should it please the Almighty to punish the manifold and crying sins of this nation by any of his terrible judgements, wars, famines, pestilences; oh, may he grant, of his infinite goodness, that we may *fall into his hand, for his mercies are great; and let us not fall into the hand of man.* 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. into the hand of our infatuated fellow-creatures: who, not having the fear of God before their eyes, are too often infligated by folly, pride, and revenge, to the most atrocious barbarities: for, as it has been proved by a series of woeful events, even *the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.* Prov xii. 10.

I will conclude this essay with an extract from a small volume entitled, "A trip to

* See, "Occasional Poems," page 12.

“ Holyhead in a Mail Coach with a
 “ Churchman and a Dissenter, in the year
 “ 1793.” In this temperate and truly
 pious production, dissenters of whatever
 persuasion, may learn, if not what they are,
 at the least what they ought to be: and
 if their real characters were universally what
 they are there represented, they would be
 indeed peaceable and loyal subjects, as well
 as a blessing and an honour to the commu-
 nity of which they are members.

‘ The freedom of the press in every
 ‘ country ought to be held sacred; and no
 ‘ man who reasons *soberly* on questions
 ‘ either of philosophy, jurisprudence, or
 ‘ divinity, is deserving of censure. But
 ‘ he who shall in any country declare him-
 ‘ self *hostile* to the established Constitution
 ‘ of it, treat the characters of the distin-
 ‘ guished supporters and defenders of it
 ‘ *contumeliously*, and avow his intention by
 ‘ circulating opposite theories of his own,
 ‘ *to subvert it*, can never surely expect to be
 ‘ treated in any other light, than as an *of-
 ‘ fender against the state*. What degree of
 ‘ this guilt falls to the lot of the much
 ‘ talked of Paine, no one who has atten-
 ‘ tively

' tively read his book can be at a loss to
 ' say. There are no doubt many truths
 ' contained in them; but the spirit that
 ' prevails through them, the reflections
 ' cast on the memory of King William,
 ' and on his present Majesty, with many
 ' other matters that might be mentioned,
 ' bring him clearly within the statute of
 ' sound sense, as well as of the Bible, ' thou
 ' shalt not revile the Gods or the rulers of
 ' thy people'. And if such be the character
 ' of the books and the avowed intention of
 ' their author, *they who circulated them*,
 ' knowing their contents, and wishing to
 ' promote his views, are justly chargeable
 ' of being guilty of *sedition practices*.'
 " Whoever," says Mr. Locke, " either
 " ruler, or subject, by force goes about to
 " invade the rights of either prince or
 " people, and lays the foundation for over-
 " turning the constitution and frame of
 " any just government, is highly guilty of
 " the greatest crime, I think, a man is
 " capable of; being to answer for all those
 " mischiefs of blood, rapine, and desola-
 " tion, which the breaking to pieces of
 " government bring on a country. And
 " he who does it, is justly to be esteemed
 " *the*

“ *the common enemy and pest of mankind;*
 “ and is to be treated accordingly.”

‘ For their (the dissenters) justification
 ‘ from these charges (of seditious practices)
 ‘ they appeal to their general conduct and
 ‘ their publick acts. Go into their religi-
 ‘ ous assemblies, Sir, where they are ac-
 ‘ customed to make supplications, prayers,
 ‘ and intercessions for the King, and all that
 ‘ are in authority; and be a witness of the
 ‘ devotion with which they perform this
 ‘ part of their duty, acknowledging their
 ‘ obligation to lead peaceable lives, in all
 ‘ godliness and honesty; a conduct which
 ‘ they are persuaded is good and accept-
 ‘ able in the sight of God our Saviour.—
 ‘ In their addresses, on various occasions,
 ‘ to his Majesty, they have not failed to ex-
 ‘ press their duty, affection, and loyalty,
 ‘ after a manner becoming good subjects.
 ‘ —And they have lately declared, in the
 ‘ most explicit manner, to all the world,
 ‘ that, “ they venerate the Constitution of
 “ their Country, are firmly attached to the
 “ present Royal Family, revere the laws,
 “ and hold all factious and seditious
 “ practices in the greatest detestation.”

‘ I am

‘ I am a friend of all mankind, a hearty
 ‘ lover of my country, and I feel myself
 ‘ most affectionately concerned for the re-
 ‘ putation, security, and happiness of the
 ‘ Dissenters, of which body I have the ho-
 ‘ nour to be one. Were they, numerous
 ‘ as they are, all present, you should, Sir,
 ‘ for once hear a sermon from the lips of a
 ‘ Non-conformist, to which I persuade
 ‘ myself they would pay a serious and de-
 ‘ vout attention, and which you would
 ‘ approve. It should be a short one, not
 ‘ of the length theirs are usually said to be.
 ‘ It should be this :

“ Read your bible. Fear God, honour
 “ the King. Be subject to the higher
 “ powers, not only for wrath, but also for
 “ conscience sake : to the King as supreme,
 “ and unto Governors, as unto them that
 “ are sent by him, for the punishment of
 “ evil doers and for the praise of them
 “ that do well. For so it is the will of
 “ God, that with well-doing ye may put
 “ to silence the ignorance of foolish men.
 “ As free, and not using your liberty as a
 “ cloak of maliciousness, but as the ser-
 “ vants of God. Render unto all their
 “ dues, tribute to whom tribute is due,
 “ custom

“ custom to whom custom, fear to whom
 “ fear, honour to whom honour. If it be
 “ possible, as much as lieth in you, live
 “ peaceably with all men. Study to be
 “ quiet, and to do your own business. Set
 “ your affections on things above, not on
 “ things on the earth. Strive to enter in
 “ at the strait gate. Work out your own
 “ salvation with fear and trembling. Let
 “ your moderation be known unto all
 “ men. The Lord is at hand. Yes, he
 “ cometh quickly; to call all men to
 “ account for the deeds done in the body.
 “ And be assured, the question then will
 “ be, not whether you were an Aristocrat
 “ or a Democrat, whether you were for
 “ this or that form of government, or were
 “ of this or that political party; but whe-
 “ ther you have been a faithful servant of
 “ God, a meek disciple of Christ, a well-
 “ wisher to all men, and a friend to your
 “ own immortal soul?” Such should be
 ‘ my sermon. And I repeat it again, the
 ‘ generality, if not all of them, would, I
 ‘ am persuaded, cordially say, Amen.’

F I N I S.

K

Should these Miscellanies happen to fall
into the hands of any one who is possessed
of Occasional Poems, the author begs
leave to suggest the following alterations.

Page 19. And thou, great sage, whose comprehensive
mind,

Grasps at all nature's universal plan,
Its animal, mineral, vegetative tribes;
Oh! it well becomes thy active spirit
From thy much-loved pursuits to pause awhile,
The pangs, &c.

Page 38. Sure angels dwell in such a form as thine,

Where innocence and gentleness combine
To frame whate'er we mortals think divine.

Yet thou'rt not all divine. Of purest blood
Thro' thy warm veins there rolls a purple
flood,

And thou'rt as sweet and fair as thou art
good.

ERRATA.

PAGE. LINE.

- 38, 4, for *reduce practice*, read *reduce to practice*.
57, 11, for *deduced*, read *derived*.
73, 12, after *worship*, insert *him*.
178, 17, for *If*, read *if*.
193, 8, dele *the* after *with*.
209, 21, for *Scripture*, read *Scriptures*.

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